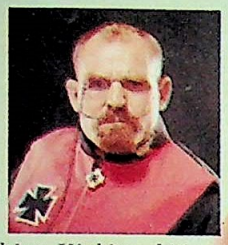
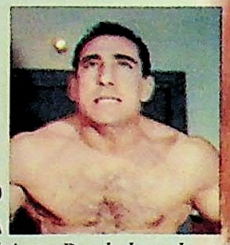
THE MAGAZINE FOR WRESTLING FANS

WRESTLING REVUE

FALL ISSUE 1959 50¢



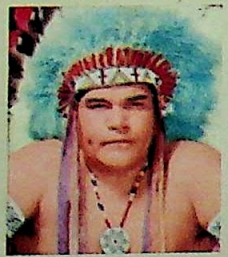
KARL VON HESS
Specialties: Kicking, biting, and eye-gouging



ANTONINO ROCCA
Specialties: Back-breaker and monkey flip.

BUDDY ROGERS
Specialties: Pile-driver and starting riots.

Specialties: Superhuman feats of strength.



CHIEF BIG HEART
Specialties: The Bow and Arrow and flying tackle.

THE GRAHAM BROTHERS *Specialties: Assorted forms of murder*
(see back cover)

there's a NEW word for it!

din'er-out' (din'er-out'), *n.* One who dines away from home, esp. formally.
A brilliant *diner-out*, though but a curate. *Byron.*

diners' club (din'ers' klub), *n.* **1.** the term for single credit card-single billing systems. **2.** used in the sense of comprehensive credit covering a wide variety of purchases and services. **3.** pre-established world-wide credit. **4.** a member of a discerning group. **5.** establishments all over the world which honor the Diners' Club Credit Card.

di-nette' (di-net';di-), *n.* [See-ETTE]. **a.** *Brit.* A hot luncheon. **b.** *U.S.* An alcove serving as a dining room in a small apartment.

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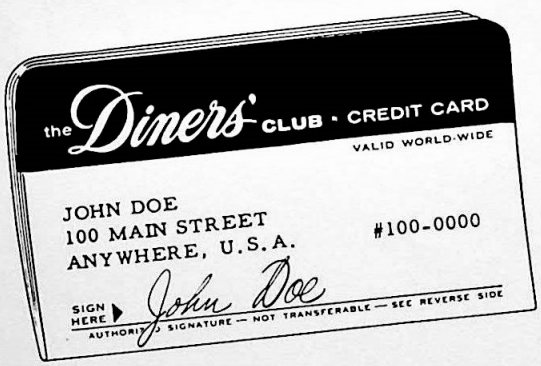

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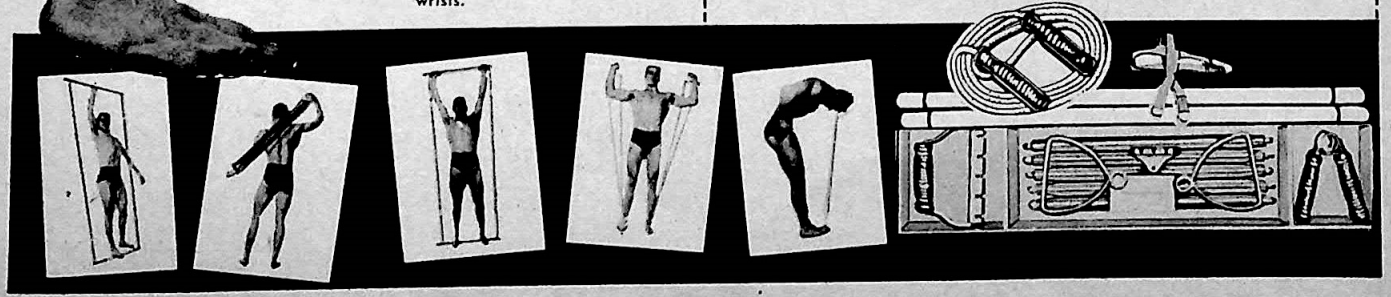

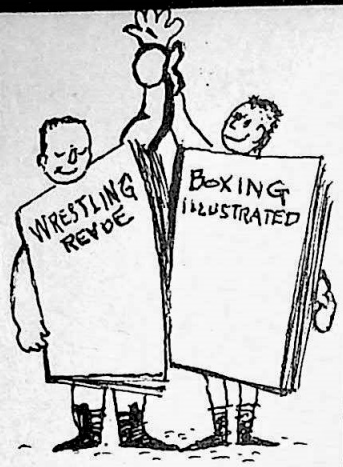

...BRAND NEW TAG TEAM!

THE MAGAZINE FOR WRESTLING FANS

WRESTLING revue

VOL. 1, NUMBER 1 FALL 1959

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AT LAST!—that Champion of the Industry, BOXING ILLUSTRATED-*Wrestling News*, has a partner! Yes, on B. I.'s first birthday it has been joined by a baby brother, WRESTLING REVUE—no doubt the most muscular baby in history! Together these two fine magazines promise to be an unbeatable "mag" team.

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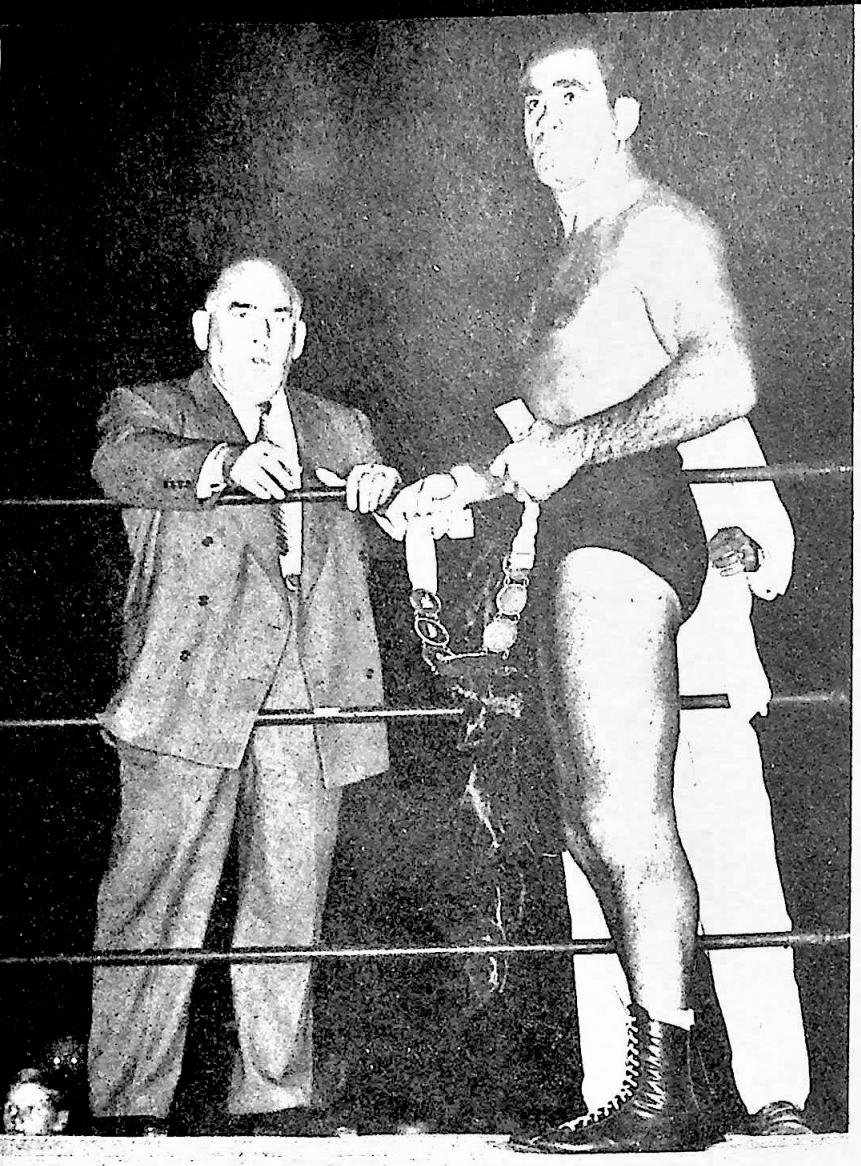
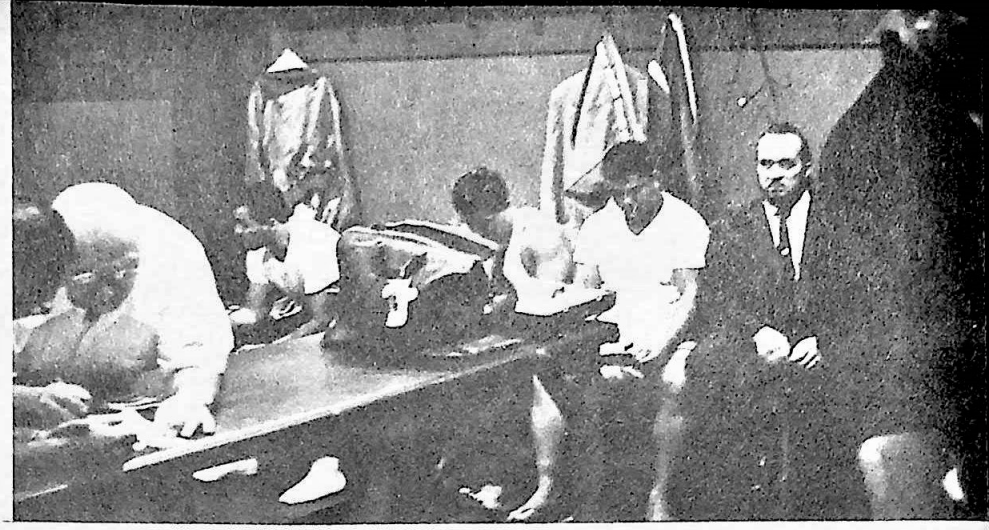


Lou Thesz most successful of modern champions. Strangler Lewis on left.

WRESTLING

Unless the confusion which surrounds the heavyweight championship is cleared soon, wrestling will die. Here is a proposed solution to the problem.

If world champions were decided on popularity, Rocco would reign.



Only the wrestlers know who among them is of real championship caliber.

MUST HAVE A GENUINE CHAMPION!

By AL MAYER

Who is the World Heavyweight Wrestling Champion?

AS you probably already know, this is not the simple question it appears to be. In fact, ask ten different people in ten different parts of the country and chances are you'll get ten different answers. I have, in my capacity as wrestling editor of the monthly publication Boxing Illustrated - Wrestling News, received thousands of letters from people all over the United States and Canada asking, pleading, for the answer.

A typical letter: "Please, just tell me one thing, who is the wrestling champion? I am so confused that I'm beginning to think its a plot to drive me out of mind. I tune in my television set one night and they say Pat O'Connor is the champion. I tune in the same set the next night and they tell me Edouard Carpentier is the champion. Another station tells me Lou Thez is the champion. I make a business trip to Minneapolis and I take in the wrestling matches. The announcer gets into the ring and says 'Introducing the Heavyweight Champion of the World' . . . Then he lets out with a name I never even heard of. Now do you understand why I'm so confused? Please sir, tell me—who is the World Heavyweight Wrestling Champion? And if you say Floyd Patterson, I will personally come to New York and sock you right in the nose."

Since I don't want a sock on the nose—but mostly because I think the wrestling fans deserve an answer to the question—here is *my* answer. I think it's the right one.

In the first place, it is my opinion—and the opinion of WRESTLING REVUE— that the fans have been treated, by the press and wrestling promoters, like the audience at a Roman Circus. The A.A.U. and most organized sports bodies look upon the wrestling fan as something out of the Stone Age. We think it's time for a change. Maybe this article will help bring it about.

Now, who makes a Heavyweight Wrestling Champion—the Public?

No. A wrestler's popularity with the public does *not* decide. If it did, Antonino Rocca would be champion and he couldn't lose the title even if he wanted to!

WHAT about the National Wrestling Alliance? The truth is that the NWA was a good thing in its heyday but it's shrunk in size and influence almost to the vanishing point. An organization of wrestling promoters, it was once to wrestling what the United Nations is to the world. The NWA gave its blessing to the champion—and since it was a semi-official organization, the champion was therefore "recognized." It was a far better situation than we have now, even though the NWA failed in many other respects. It became too strong for its own good, and defeated itself. When it began using dictatorial methods, its powers were voided.

It was largely the failure of the NWA that brought about the present troubles. Now professional wrestling is not considered a sport by any commission, authorized body or by the press. It is classed as an *exhibition* and any wrestling show must be licensed as such. It's unlikely that anybody's feelings will be hurt by this revelation—everybody knows it already.

Here, then, is what determines the Heavyweight Wrestling Champion. *The Wrestlers themselves!* And they've done so for many years. Until a few years ago the boys decided their champion in a dramatic and romantic way. When a particularly fine wrestler thought he was better than the reigning champion he challenged him to a "shooting match." This was a match held in a private gym, cellar, or barn, to which only the elite of the wrestling world were invited. There, in comparative privacy, using *official* catch-as-catch-can rules, the champ and his challenger wrestled to a finish. The winner was recognized as official champion by the great powers in the business. Without the strength of the NWA to rule the roost, such things would be pointless now. And in a way it's too bad.

For an example of how it was in the old days, let's go back about 35 years to the New York Hippodrome. It was there that one of the greatest of all

(*continued on page* 47)

Rosebud Varga sits in car while Billy goes in to make motel reservations.

THE UNBEATABLE

Billy and Rosebud receive certificates in Honolulu. They always travel together.

Billy has been a star attraction for about 12 years—earns 30G's a year.

TEAM OF VARGA & VARGA

Life for Billy and Rosebud Varga has been one long romance packed with moments of unbearable tension. Here's the heart warming story of a great wrestler and the woman he worships.

By WILLIAM MORRIS

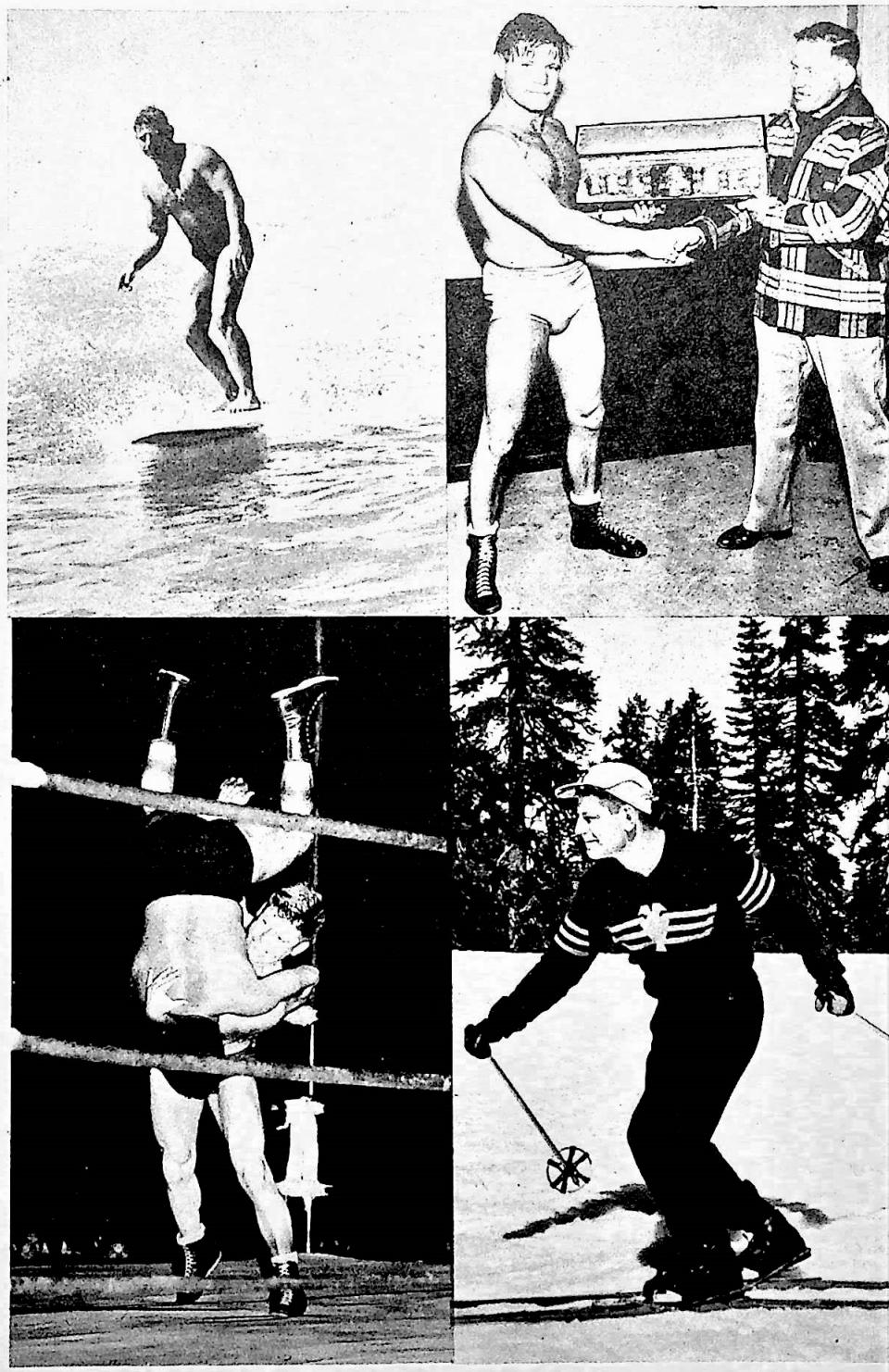
Billy Varga's wrestling career goes back forty years or more. Back to the days when Billy's father, Joe Varga, was making a reputation as one of wrestling's all-time greats. That was long before Billy himself was born.

"I remember," said Billy in his comfortable California home, "as a kid I was always afraid of being unable to live up to Dad's reputation. It worried me until Dad took me aside, one day. It was just after he had taught me his invention, the 'salto' hold—the one that had helped him get into Ripley's Believe it or Not column—and I was pretty discouraged by the time he finished.

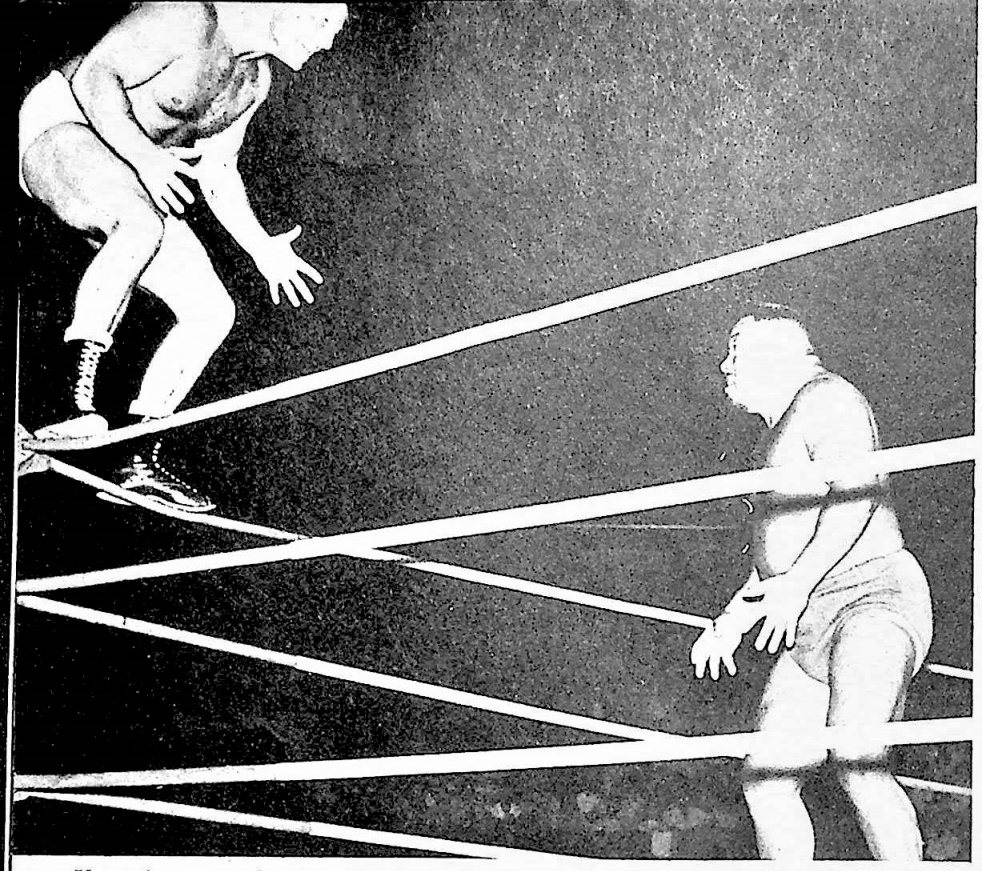
" 'Billy,' Dad said, 'with this hold and a few others, I won three world wrestling titles in one night, middleweight, cruiser and heavyweight. Probably nobody will ever do that again—not even you. Are you going to let this wreck your life?' Before I could answer, he went on, 'Because if you are, tell me now and we'll forget all about wrestling.' "

Billy smiled gratefully at the memory. "Dad went on to tell me that I had my own life to live—I couldn't hope to relive his. Whatever I did I'd have to do on my own. He also said that from the looks of things I'd do a pretty good job."

continued



The interesting thing about Billy is that he knows how to live and enjoy all he does.



Varga is spectacular type wrestler capable of taking impossible risks to thrill and win.

Billy and Rosebud land in Honolulu with the gang. The kids go whenever possible.

Billy always spends at least one day a week with his boys. Here they pan for gold.

THE UNBEATABLE TEAM OF VARGA & VARGA

The reporter turned to the lovely brunette who sat across the room watching her trim handsome husband. "What about it, Rosebud—has Billy done a good job?"

Two hours later Mrs. Billy Varga had proven to the reporter's satisfaction that her husband was not quite all she said he was. *Nobody* could be! But he came pretty close, and from Rosebud Varga's enthusiastic narrative comes a picture of two married people who have lived a wonderful life together, have earned all the good things that came their way, and stand to gain a lot more.

"The three best things, of course," said Rosebud with the enthusiasm of motherhood, "are our children, Billy, Courtland and Royce." She went on to tell the story of the boys, their likes, dislikes and problems. Her enthusiasm made it interesting. Then she talked about other things that were also very important in the lives of the Vargas. At the end of the two hour interview one thing stood out strongest, that the most important thing to the family is Rosebud Varga herself.

Billy Sr. will back this up at once. "I've never tried to figure out who has been the greatest influence in my life—my father or my wife, so I call it a draw," he said diplomatically. But the way he looks at his beautiful wife leaves little doubt that, without her he would be little more than a top-notch wrestler, which is what he already was when

(*continued on page* 47)

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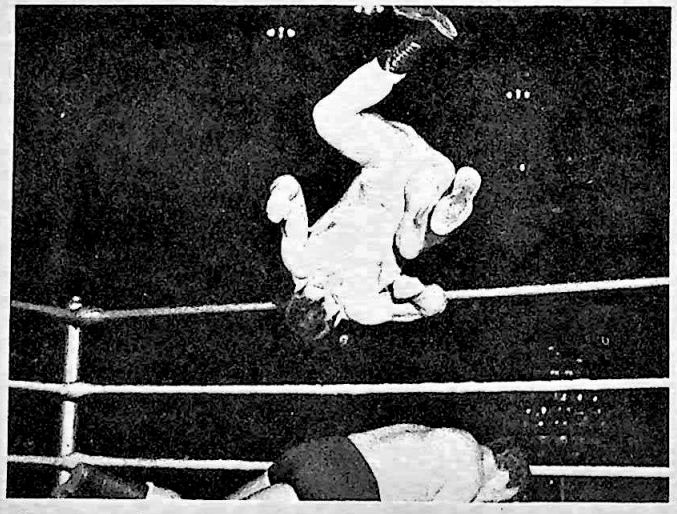
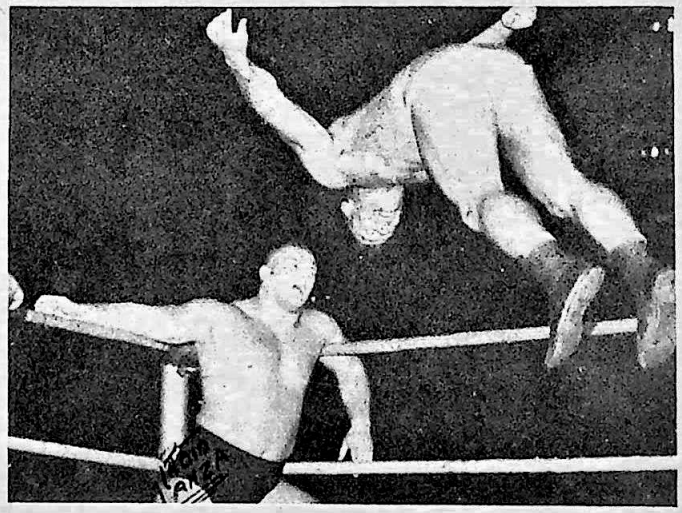
Carpentier is basically an acrobat, an Olympic gymnastic champion in fact. He does amazing flips and twists which dazzle fans.

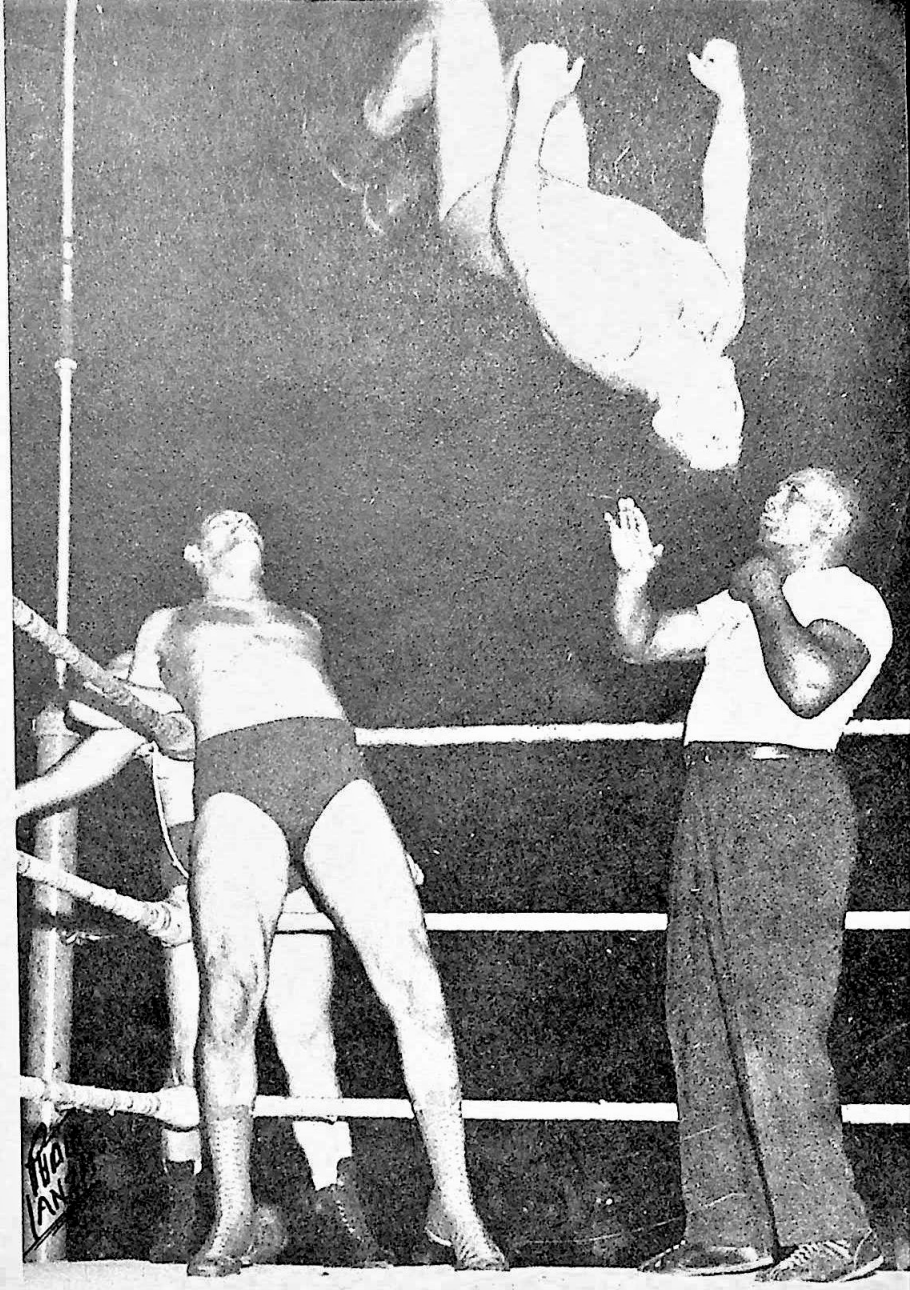


Opponents have learned that the best way to protect themselves against Carpentier is to lie flat and hope for the best.



Opponent Dick "The Bruiser" Affils looks terrified as Flying Frenchman springs toward him like a tiger out of a tree.

EDUARDO CARPENTIER the daring young man with the flying trapezius!



Remarkable photo shows Carpentier flying 6 feet off the floor. Referee is ex-boxing champ Joe Walcott. Killer Kowalski is held by Ed's tag partner.

(Trapezius: *A powerful muscle of the back which helps to raise the arms and enables birds to fly.*)

"That Eduardo—he is half bird!" was the recent comment of a bruised, bloody and beaten wrestler who had seen his opponent fly out of the overhead lights, like Superman, and crash into him, head foremost. Other villainous wrestlers, who have been on the receiving end of 225 pounds of Ed Carpentier, have other things to say about this sleekly-built, handsome, ex-heavyweight champion. We can only print one of these comments here. "*Ptui!*" remarked Killer Kowalski when asked about Carpentier.

continued

The Carpentier dropkick is probably the most effective in wrestling today. He gets tremendous power in kicks as illustrated here against Kowalski.

Killer Kowalski, whom Carpentier hates because of his savage tactics, lies on canvas as Frenchman does perfect back flip.

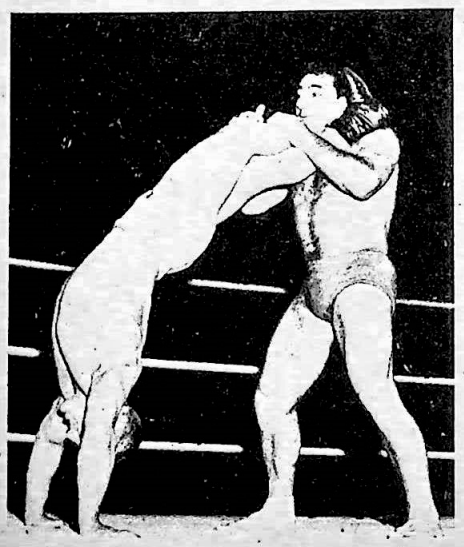
the daring young man with the flying trapezius!

This reaction is based on the fact that Eduardo, who was brought to this country from France by Eddie Quinn, Canadian promoter who was thunderstruck by the French champion's antics in European rings.

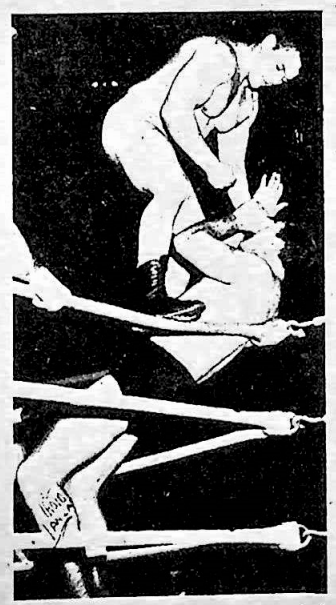
"The first time I laid eyes on him," recalls Eddie, "he was soaring across the mat from eight feet high! He'd leaped off the top rope in the opposite corner. When he landed on the other guy, it was pure murder! This fellow is an athletic wonder, I said to myself—he's headed for the world championship! And I was right."

From the time Eduardo leaped and gyrated his way to world fame on the French Olympic team, his destiny was sealed. He has brought a new excitement to big time wrestling with the kind of wrestling started ten years ago by Antonino Rocca—but improved upon by the flip-flopping Frenchman. Rocca is merely an agile athlete; Carpentier is an acrobat besides. A health and strength bug, he is the idol not only of the bobby-sox trade but also the muscle boys. These pictures show why.

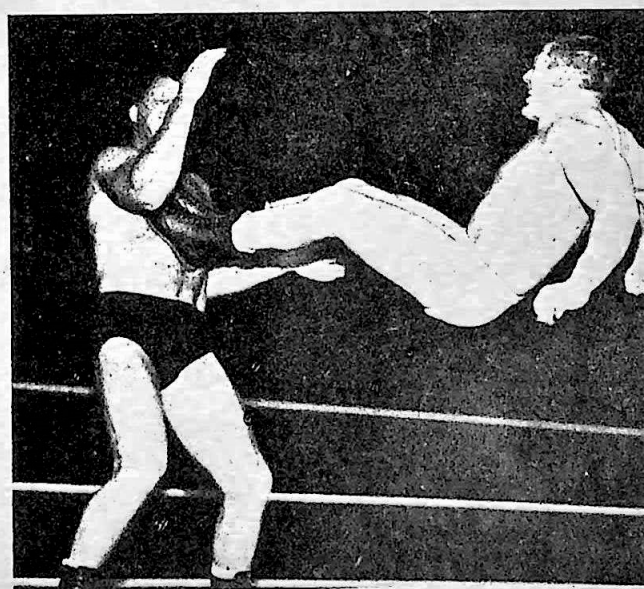
Carpentier about to whip the 300-pound Kowalski over his shoulder. Notice the remarkable agility and grace in Ed's body.



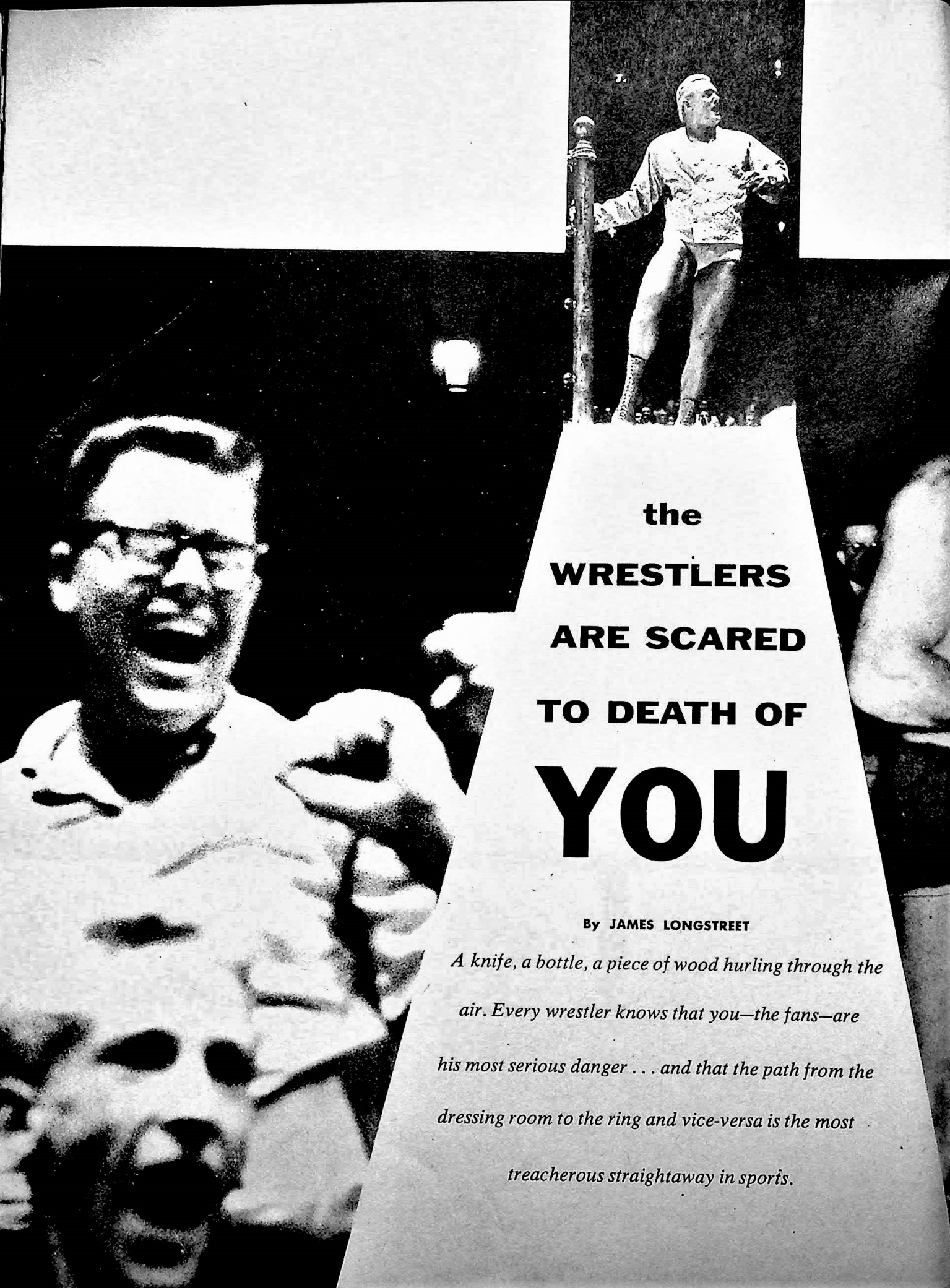
Even the great Rocca was made to look bad by Carpentier. Bout ended in draw.



When Carpentier gets mad he goes wild. He attacks Sharpe.



Results of the murderous series of bouts between Carpentier and hated rival Kowalski, left, is even.

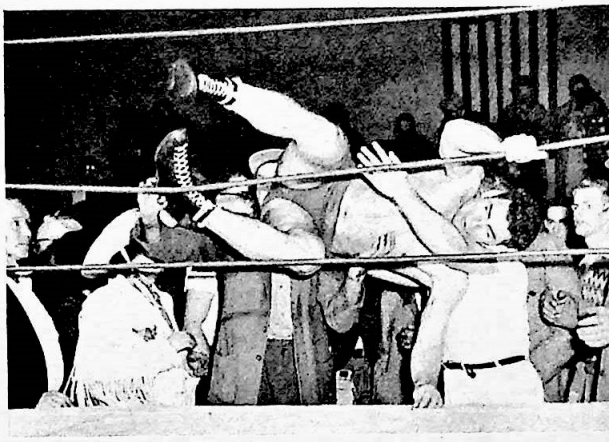


the WRESTLERS ARE SCARED TO DEATH OF YOU

By JAMES LONGSTREET

A knife, a bottle, a piece of wood hurling through the air. Every wrestler knows that you—the fans—are his most serious danger . . . and that the path from the dressing room to the ring and vice-versa is the most treacherous straightaway in sports.

One million years ago the first man was attacked by a cave bear. The bear seized his victim in its huge furry arms and began to squeeze. The man struck at the brute with his stone axe but only made it angrier. For a while the man's low-browed mate watched, breathless and excited. Then, as her lord and master began to weaken, she could stand it no longer. Grabbing a nearby rock, she dashed forward, whomped the bear on the noggin and smashed in its skull. The man, saved, thereupon slugged his old lady in the chops and said, "Don't just stand there—cook the damned thing!" And she answered, adoringly, "My *hero!*"



There is no more dangerous moment for any wrestler than dropping into crowd.

The first wrestling fan was born.

That first wrestling match set the pattern for all those that have occurred since. At least, that's what the last graduating class of Psychiatric Tech was told. Says Dean Roscoe Powell of Tech, "Human beings are pretty close to their cave man ancestors. And wrestling fans are pretty close to human beings. When they shout to the hero, "Kill him!" that's *exactly* what they mean!—although they may not realize it. When they get really excited, they sometimes try to do the killing themselves!"

Most wrestlers agree with this theory —and some have proved it with their own blood.

Tough guys like Dr. Jerry Graham suffer most of the trouble—like that unfortunate cave bear. Jerry first became a blood donor about ten years ago during a rousing scuffle with Antonino Rocca, newly arrived in the U. S. and already popular. Graham had messed up Rocca badly before being pinned. Scowling and still protesting his hard luck, Graham left

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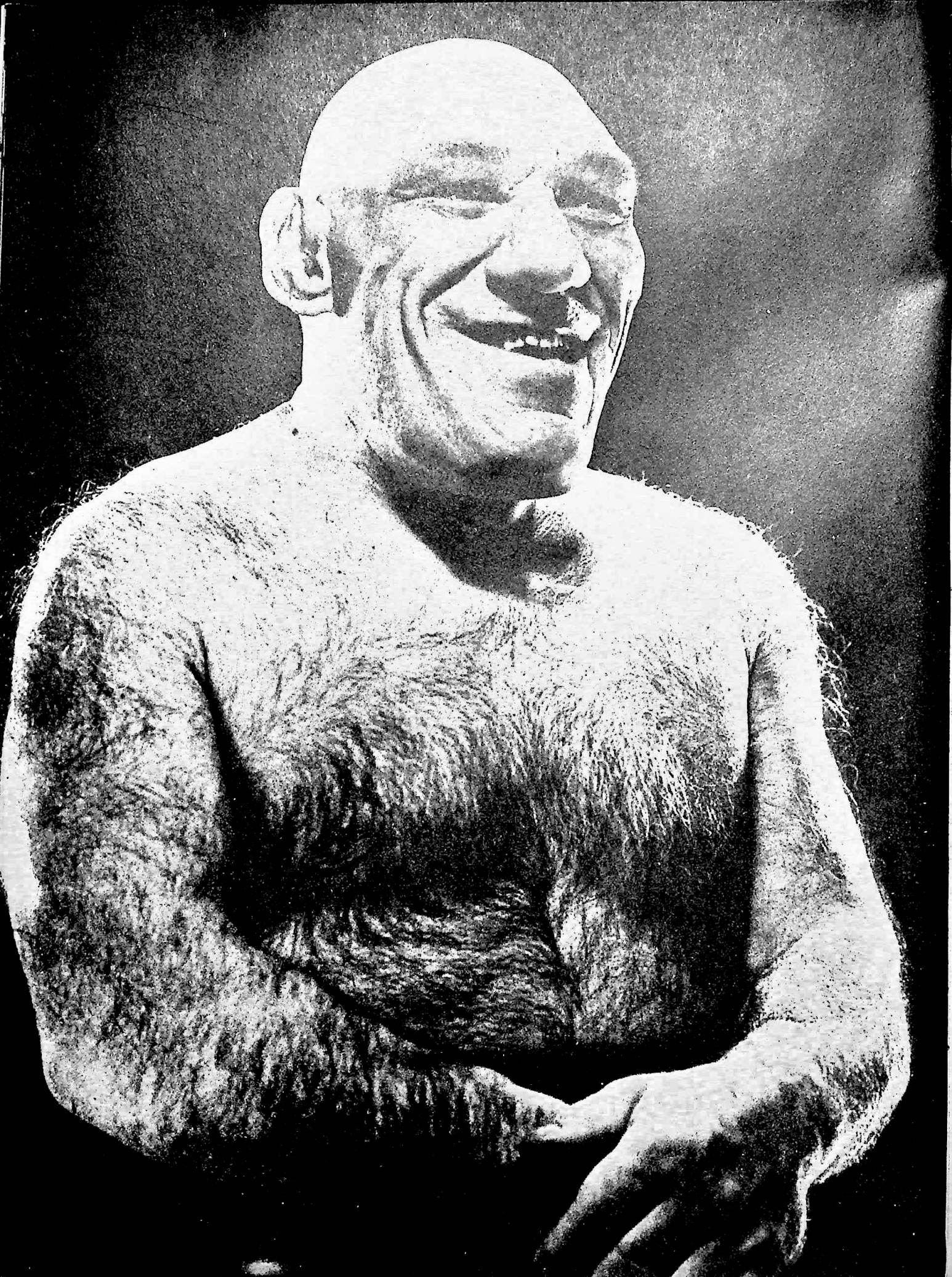
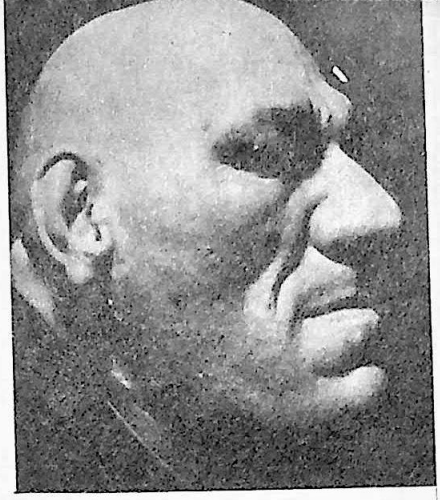


THE ANGEL WAS NO DEVIL

By WARREN TUCKER

The truth about wrestling's most hideous freak—Maurice Tillet, The French Angel.

Pojello and his famous discovery.



It was a winter picnic in New York's Central Park, and the sophomores were happy and carefree as all sophomores should be. As they trooped toward the lake, ice skates hanging around their necks, they joked about the February cold that kept the Park all but deserted.

Then, suddenly, like a chilly wind, terror was among them.

From the darkness of a crosswalk bridge a shambling figure emerged and ran toward them. For a moment there was no panic, only stunned surprise as the creature came closer, its long gorilla-like arms flopping loosely at its sides. A tremendous barrel shaped body was supported on spindly legs that seemed to bow beneath its weight, and atop the unnaturally wide shoulders a fantastic head reposed. Twice the size of the normal human head, it appeared to have no neck, and the monstrous jutting jaw seemed to be fastened to the enormous chest. And yet the thing was somehow human.

A girl screamed. This set off the demon of panic; like windblown leaves the high school class scattered in all directions, leaving lunch boxes and ice skates in their wakes, and filling the quiet winter air with cries of terror.

Behind them, the gargantuan shape halted uncertainly and gazed after them. The frightful grin that had distorted his ugly features vanished, and in its place came an expression of almost unbearable sadness. From the cavernous mouth came a gentle voice that said in French, "The poor children, why must they run always? If they could only know me . . ."

Now, his massive shoulders bowed, as the grotesque man turned back toward his hotel, all thought of a healthful run in the park gone. As he emeregd into the street, Central Park West, he passed a poster-pasted lamp post. Staring at the sidewalk, he didn't see the hideous likeness of himself that screamed to the world, "Wrestling tonight—The World's Ugliest Man—The Angel!"

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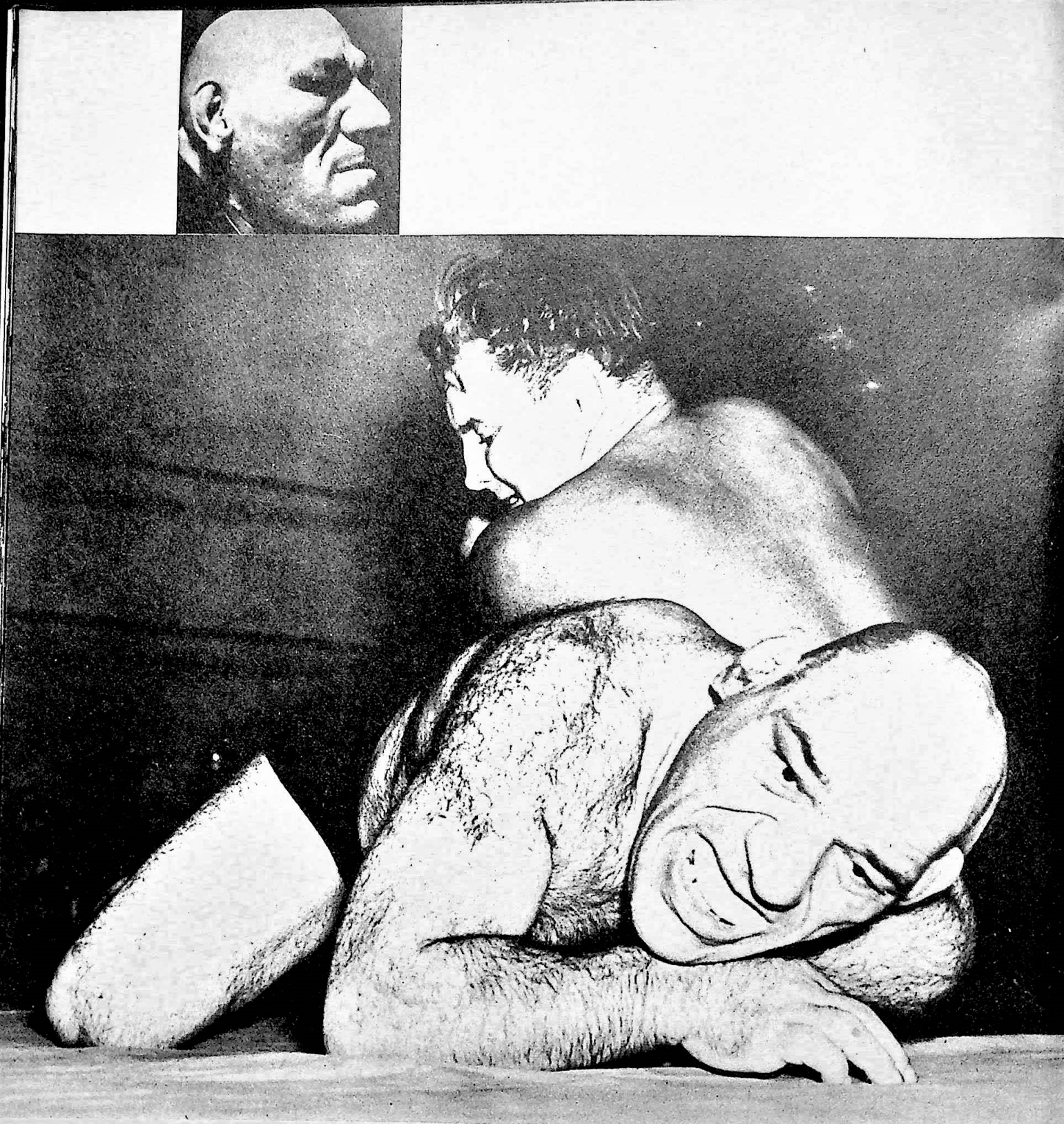
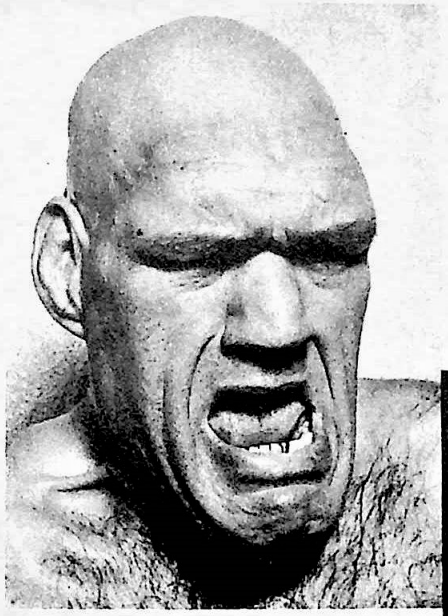
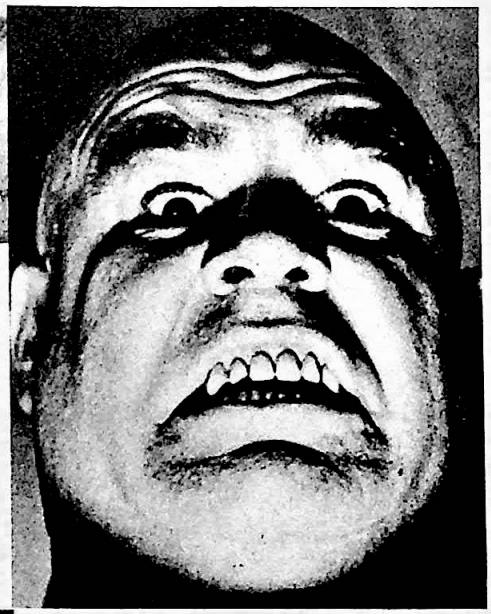


Former world heavyweight champion Danno O'Mahoney applies pressure on leg-lock making Angel grimace in pain. He broke free and went on to win this match in 1940.

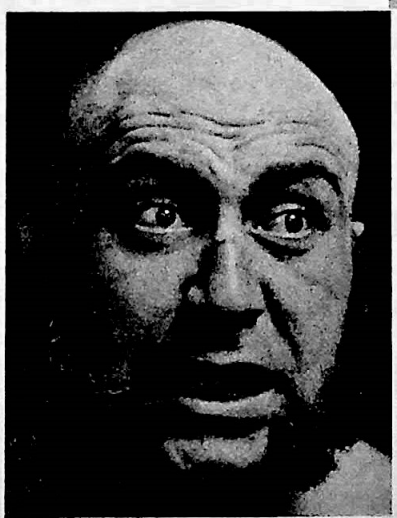
THE IMITATORS



THE SWEDISH ANGEL



THE SUPER SWEDISH ANGEL



THE IRISH ANGEL

THE ANGEL WAS NO DEVIL

Within weeks after that, the entire United States was to become familiar with the bestial features and Neanderthal body of Maurice Tillet, the French Angel. Picture and news magazines emblazoned his face and form across their pages, and the newspapers had a new and more fantastic story about him every day. He was, according to many staid and usually reliable journals, a throwback to Stone Age Man. He was, they said, the strongest living human. And they said also he was an expert wrestler.

Actually, none of these things was true.

The French Angel, the most publicised wrestling personality of modern times, and one of the most successful, was an unfortunate French gentleman—in the true sense of the word—who suffered from a disease called acromegaly, in which the pituitary gland goes haywire. The overactive gland causes ugly distortions of the face and head, enlarging the features and bones and causing a bogeyman appearance. Although the Angel was stronger than most acromegalics, who get weaker and weaker, he was far from being the strongest man in the world, or even the strongest on his street. And it was admitted later that he really wasn't a good wrestler.

But he was the greatest mat attraction since the Terrible Turk, and he will always be remembered as an important factor in the modern upsurge in wrestling's popularity.

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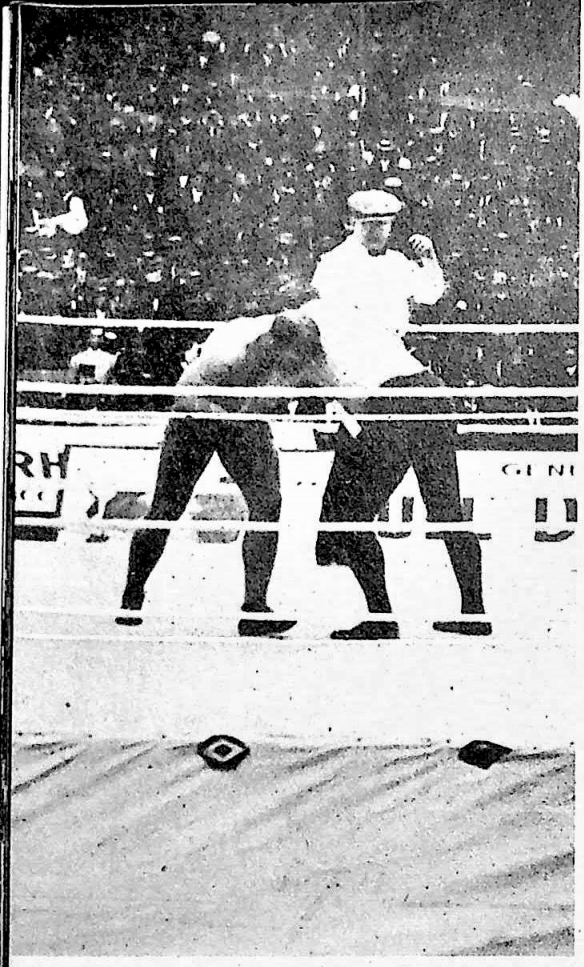
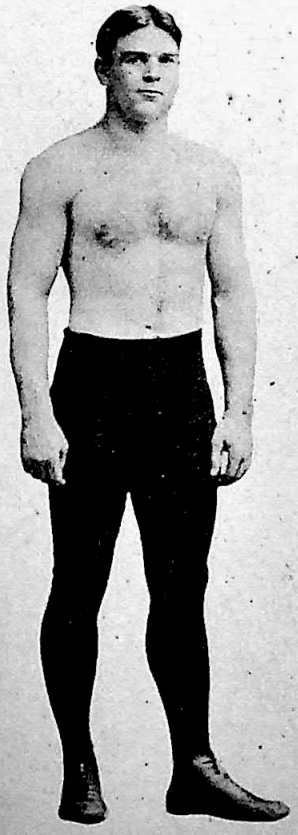


WRESTLING —SPORT OR SIDE SHOW?

By HAL HENNESEY

Famous world championship bout between Frank Gotch, left, and Russian Lion George Hackenschmidt in Chicago ball park. Gotch won bout.

Gorgeous George started career as plain George Wagner. He was expert wrestler but never amounted to much until he switched to become Gorgeous George.



(Publisher's Note: In the March, 1959 issue of "Reader's Digest" appeared an article indigestible to every professional wrestler and most wrestling fans. Called "The Wonderful World of Wrestling," by James Stewart-Gordon, the article was supposedly an expose of professional wrestling. Actually it wasn't, since it's pretty hard to expose something that everybody already knows about. We admit that Stewart-Gordon told something of the truth—but not the whole truth. Here is what the Digest article left out. . .)

During a March wrestling card at the Capitol arena in Washington, D. C., heroic Antonino Rocca was interviewed, on TV, between matches. Suddenly Argentina blurted out, "—Now, about that article in the Readers' Digest—I think the guy who wrote it was sick, or maybe he needed the money, eh?"

Taken by surprise, the announcer brushed over the question quickly. It was a delicate subject for unrehearsed airing. But back in the dressing room Rocca and the other wrestlers didn't mince words. The Digest "expose" had them worried. Wrestling, it had stated, was a fraud.

"Look," said Hard-Boiled Haggerty, the intellectual monster, "at what that magazine did to the smoking habits of this country. It could do the same to wrestling!"

"How could they put a filter on wrestling?" asked Pepper Gomez, the comedian type .

Two of the greatest stars were Strangler Lewis, right, and Joe Stecher.

Haggerty snapped his fingers. "That's exactly what they might do! Put a filter —a *muzzle*—on us! Hamstring us, that's what!"

And so it went. Wrestlers around the country buzzed with indignation and injured surprise. At last someone had blown the whistle.

They needn't have woried.

A few weeks after the Digest article appeared, there was another evening of wrestling at the Capitol. The place was packed, as usual, with 5,000 cheering, wildly enthusiastic fans. Once again several million people, according to a reliable survey, turned the matches in on their television sets.

They witnessed a variety of murderous assault, mayhem and bloodletting; the Shiek, clad in his chic burnoose and accompanied by his ever-present Salami, killed germs with his smoke and an opponent with his choke; Dr. Jerry Graham administered first aid to his younger brother, Eddie, from whose apparently fractured cranium cascaded rivulets of blood; Johnny Valentine, with eye-popping rage, inserted his thumb and forefinger into the nostrils of an unfortunate victim and hurled him like a bowling ball through the ropes and into the lap of a 60-year-old member of the D.A.R. who straightway belted him over the head with her umbrella while shouting, "Get back in there, you slob, and tear that monster apart!"

In other words, nothing had changed. And nothing will.

Because the fans are not the fuzzy-brained creeps that Mr. Stewart-Gordon implied they are; the wrestlers are not the low-I.Q.'d Cro-Magnons—and wrestling is not crooked. A show? Yes! But not a side show. To quote the late Jack Curley, who shares top billing with Tex Rickard as the greatest wrestling promoter of all time: *"I've never seen a crooked wrestling match!"* For a number of complex reasons, the mob has never muscled in on wrestling and wrestlers. The racketeers kept out, and the gamblers kept out. Very likely there has been no "smart" money put on a wrestling match since Jim Londos' day. This fact alone should make a lot of the bluenoses happy.

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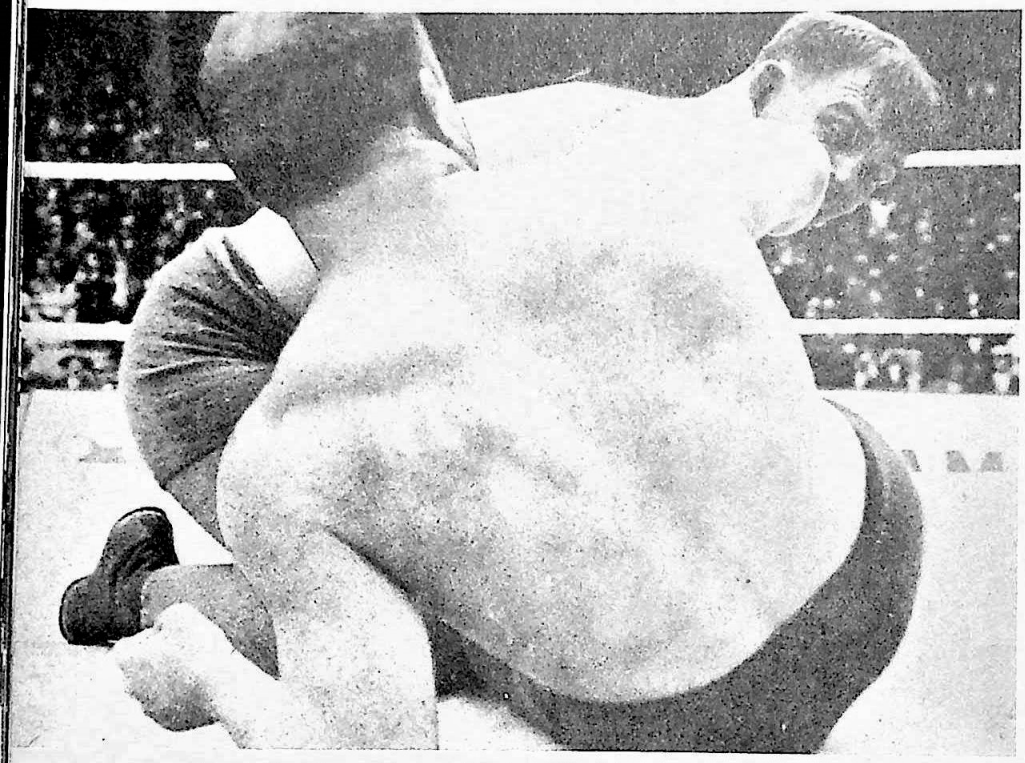
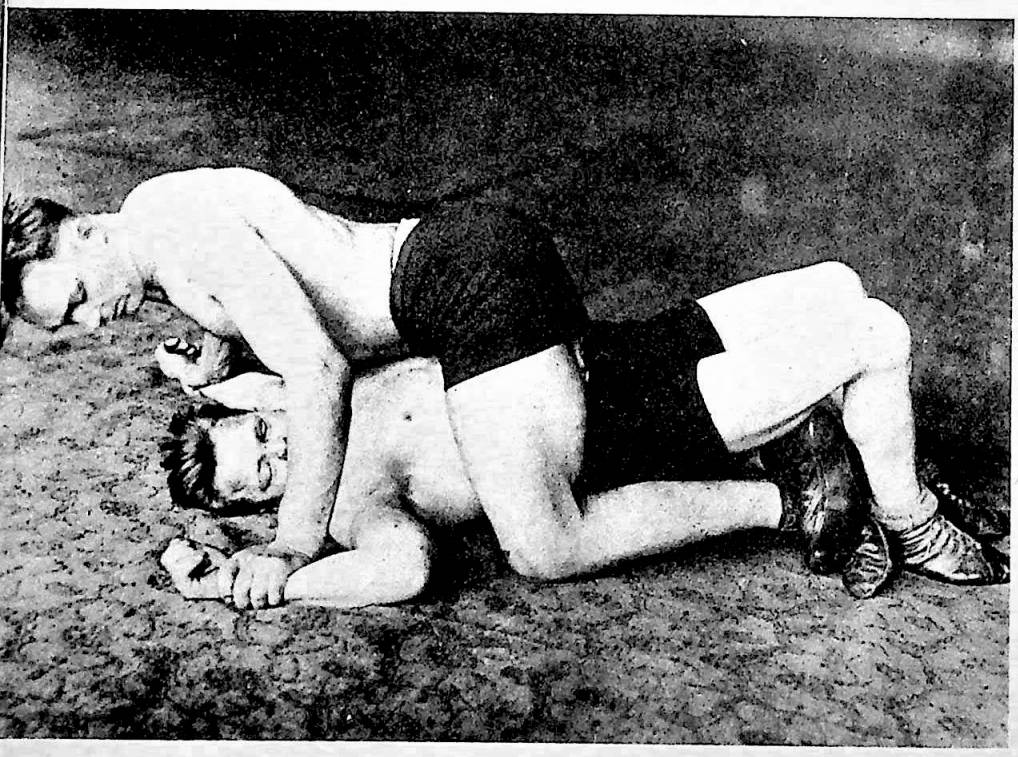


Frank Gotch and George Hackenschmidt, nearest camera, remained locked in same hold for as much as 20 minutes at a time. Would today's fans enjoy that?



The great Joe Stecher illustrates the hold that made him world famous—the body scissors. Once he clamped a victim in that hold the bout was over.

WRESTLING — SPORT OR SIDE SHOW

Now it's time to be sensible about wrestling. And here is the sensible answer to both the rabid critic who says wrestling is a downright fraud—and the all-out fan who thinks that Carl Von Hess is actually Hitler in disguise and that the Shiek supports a dozen concubines in Mecca.

If you don't like today's brand of professional wrestling, you should have lived fifty years ago. Maybe you did—and maybe that's what's troubling you. Maybe you're living in the past and longing for the good old days. Well, they had Model T Fords then, too. But the style and *purpose* of wrestling have changed with the years—just like the Fords. Just as the Model T gave way to a more modern method of transportation, so the tired, boring old wrestling style was replaced by a more dynamic active and interesting style.

Showmanship was added.

Along came newcomers like the Terrible Turks and the Masked Marvels, and Man Mountain Dean of happy memory. And with them a strange thing happened. More people started to attend the wrestling matches. The heroes' names became household words, and their winning and losing were an important topic of discussion. For the first time people who had never cared for any sport, let alone wrestling, found themselves going to the arenas to watch a new kind of *entertainment*. And there is the important difference between the wrestling of the legendary Frank Gotch, of the early 1900's, and the wrestling that began during the Roaring Twenties.

One was sport—and boring to watch. The other was entertainment—colorful and thrilling!

Many of the younger fans think that

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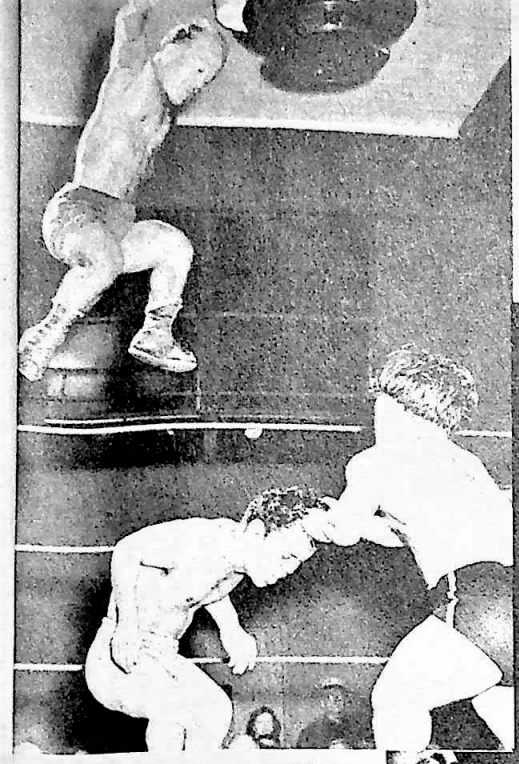
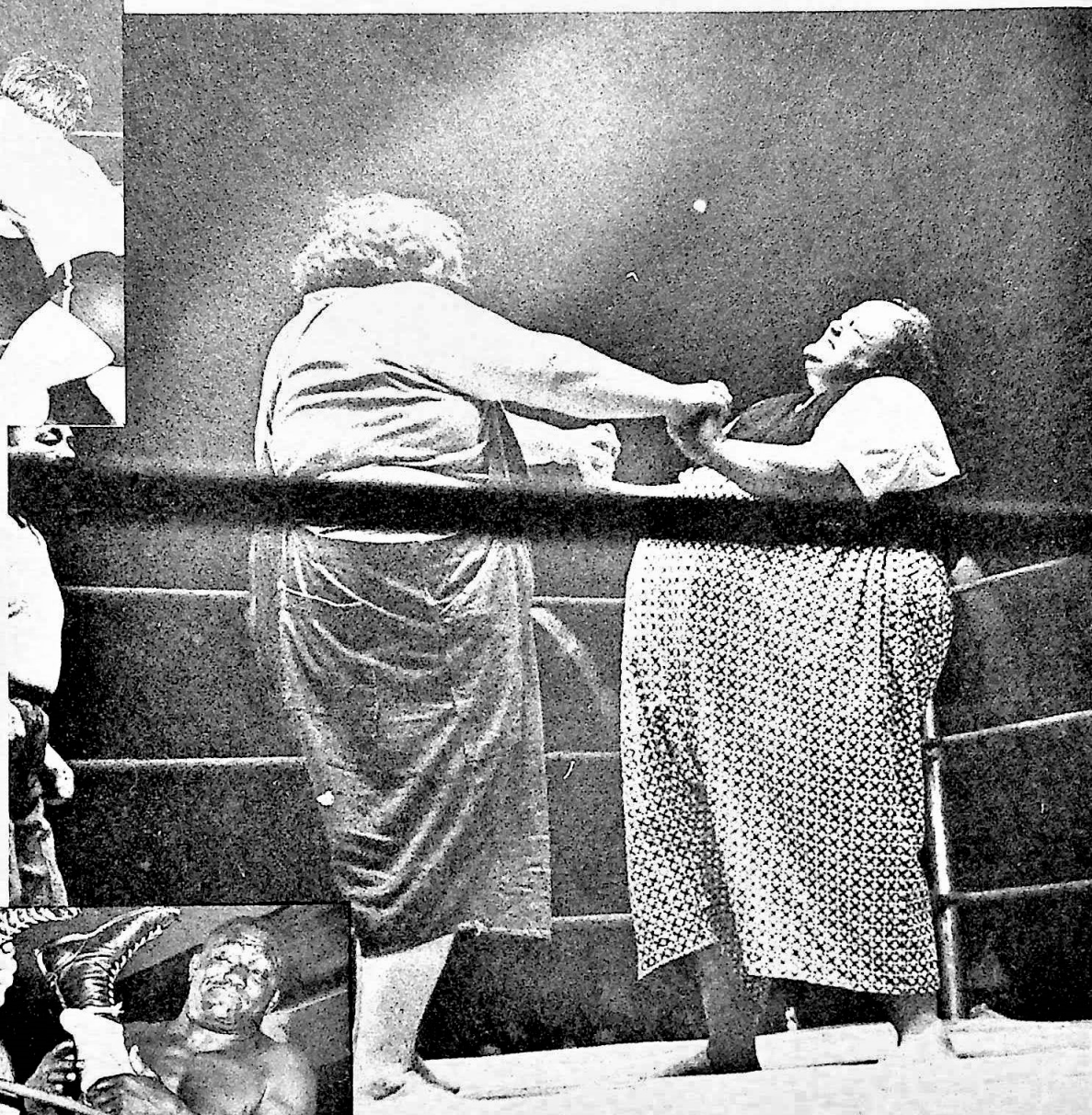
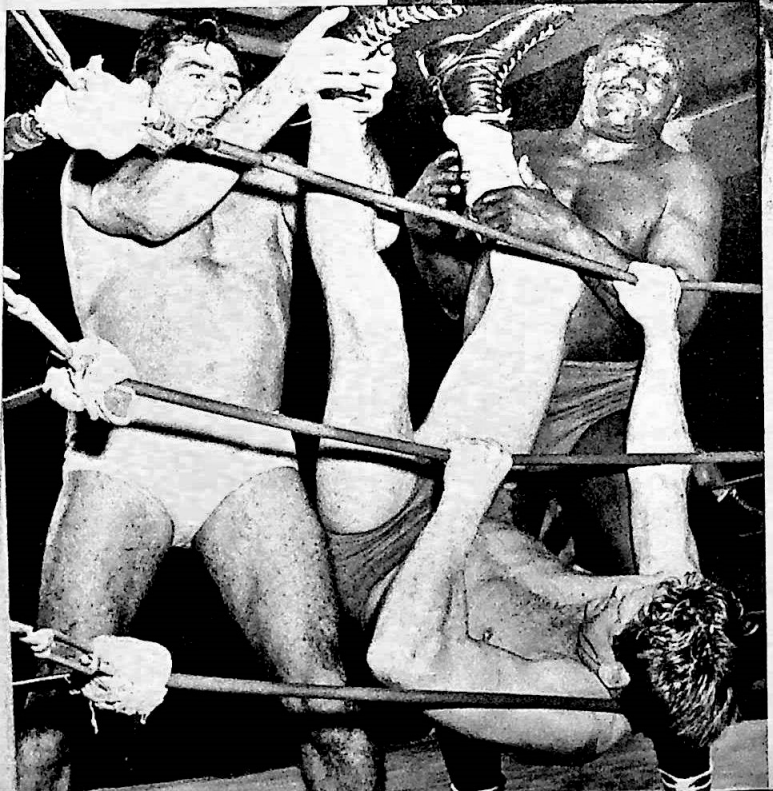


Midget wrestlers provide fans with a change-of-pace novelty.

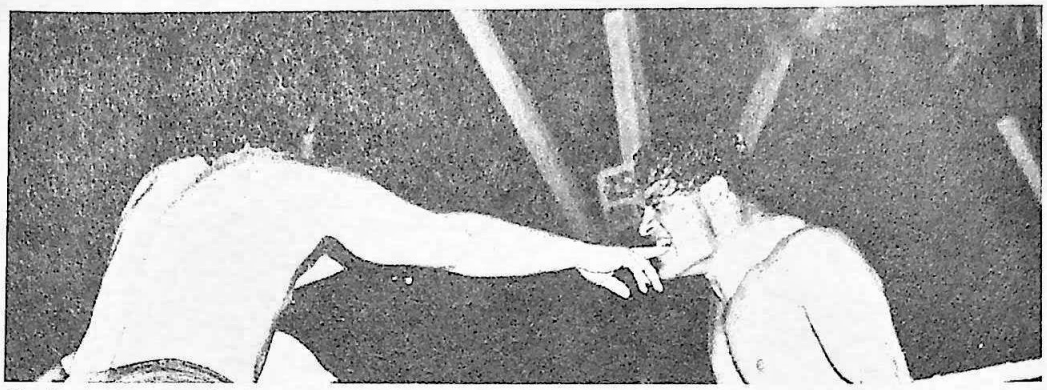


Freaks, like 640-pound Haystack Calhoun, left, and 750-pound Happy Humphrey, like the midgets, are used to draw the fans.

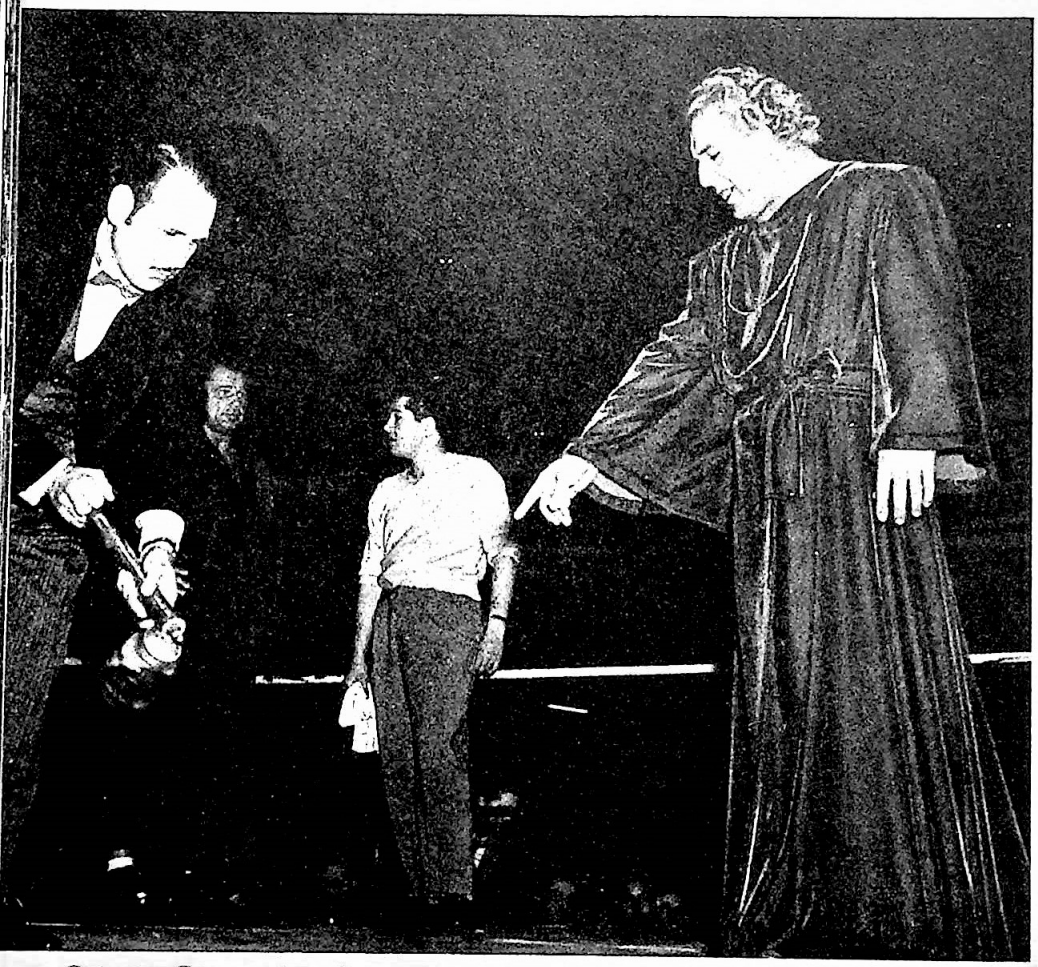


Modern fans demand and get constant action between heroes and villains.

Lord Blears is good wrestler who needed gimmick to click.



Cyclone Anaya, who is one of the most sensational wrestlers today, gets a rise out of Texas crowd by chomping down on his opponent's finger.



Gorgeous George set a pattern that was to be followed by hundreds of other wrestlers. He was first to bleach his hair, spray perfume in the ring and have a valet.

One of the most successful gimmicks used today is to put a black hood over the head of a "worn out" wrestler. It has a miraculous effect on any audience and makes an overnight star of the Masked Man.

the exhibition-type wrestling is something that started with television. A slightly older generation is certain that Man Mountain Dean and his friends started it in the thirties. Actually, it all began shortly after World War One, about the time Dempsey was established as heavyweight champion in a somewhat different field. The venerable Al Mayer, one of that illustrious era's leading promoters, tells how it was.

"This happened in 1925 after Joe Stecher beat Zbysko for the Championship," Al reminisced recently. "Stecher was a marvelous wrestler and a wonderful guy. One night, a young guy named Ed White—a raw greenhorn at that time, was matched to wrestle the great champion, Stecher. It was in a grubby little tank town arena and only a few hundred people were present.

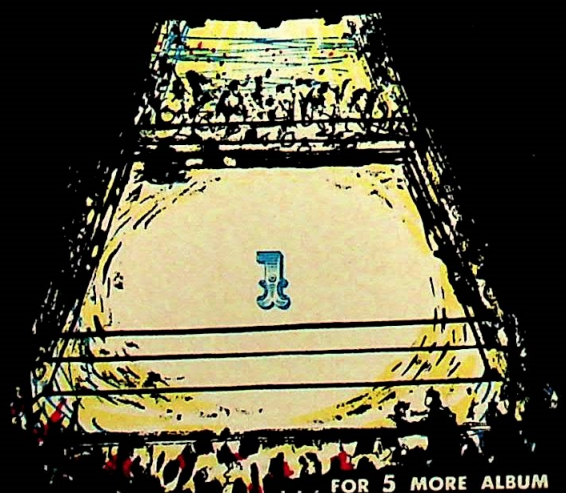
"White," Al chuckled, "got to the place around eight o'clock and sat in one corner of the dressing room, sweating blood while he waited for Stecher. Finally, at a quarter to nine the great man strode into the dressing room like a tornado. Throwing his bag onto the bench, he peeled off his coat. 'Who,' he hollered, 'am I wrestling tonight?' The awed athletes pointed to poor Ed White, who cowered in the corner.

" 'You know anything about wrestling, kid?' asked the big man. 'I mean, you ever wrestled before?' But Ed could hardly talk. He just kept making odd sounds in his throat. 'Oh, the hell with it!' Stecher said, and slapped Ed on the shoulder, nearly breaking it. 'Do your best—we'll give 'em a good show.'

"And they did. Ed admitted that Stecher could have pinned him inside of sixty seconds if he'd wanted to—or torn his head off, for that matter. But, no—the champion carried the young fellow for a full thirty minutes, giving the small but enthusiastic crowd more than their money's worth—and giving young White his start. The result was a big boost for Ed, who went on to become one of wrestling's all-time greats." Al paused here, then went on. "The thing to remember here is that Stecher got no more than a hundred dollars or so for this bout. Next night, at the Hippodrome, he received a good ten thousand—and put on the same show! No better, no worse. He was a r al champion, all right!"

ALBUM PHOTO
NUMBER 1

JOHNNY VALENTINE is a merciless killer in the ring who delights in knocking his victims into insensibility by clubbing them over the head with his elbow. An enormously powerful giant, he stands 6 feet 4, weighs 240; earns about $75,000 a year wrestling an average of five nights a week. Born in Renton, Washington 25 years ago.



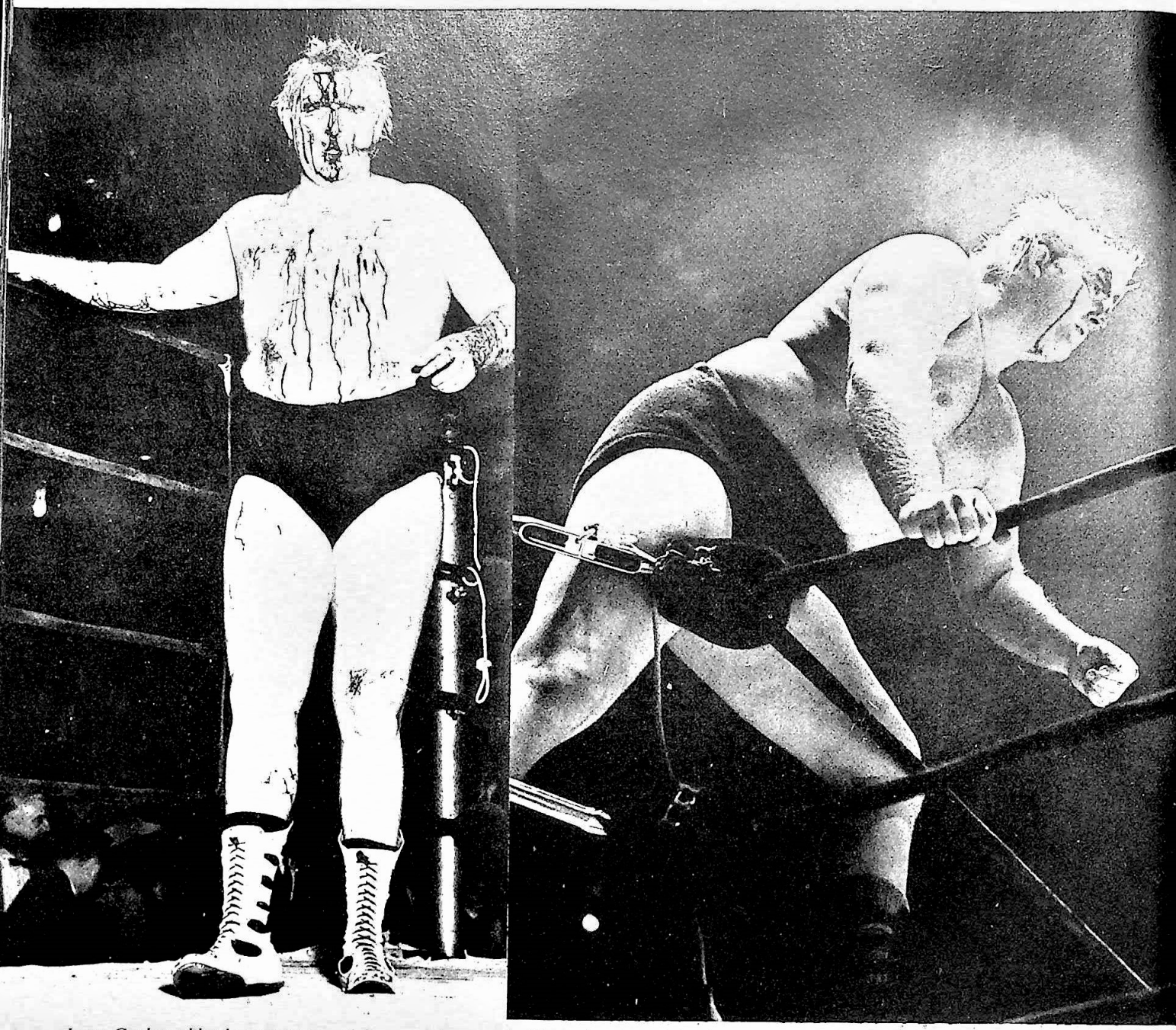
. . . FOR 5 MORE ALBUM PERSONALITIES SEE PAGE 42

Forget all that talk you hear

about blood capsules and the like.

You can take our word for it

THE GRAHAMS



Jerry Graham bleeds an average of four nights a week, 52 weeks a year. Blood, in fact, has become the trademark of Graham Bros.

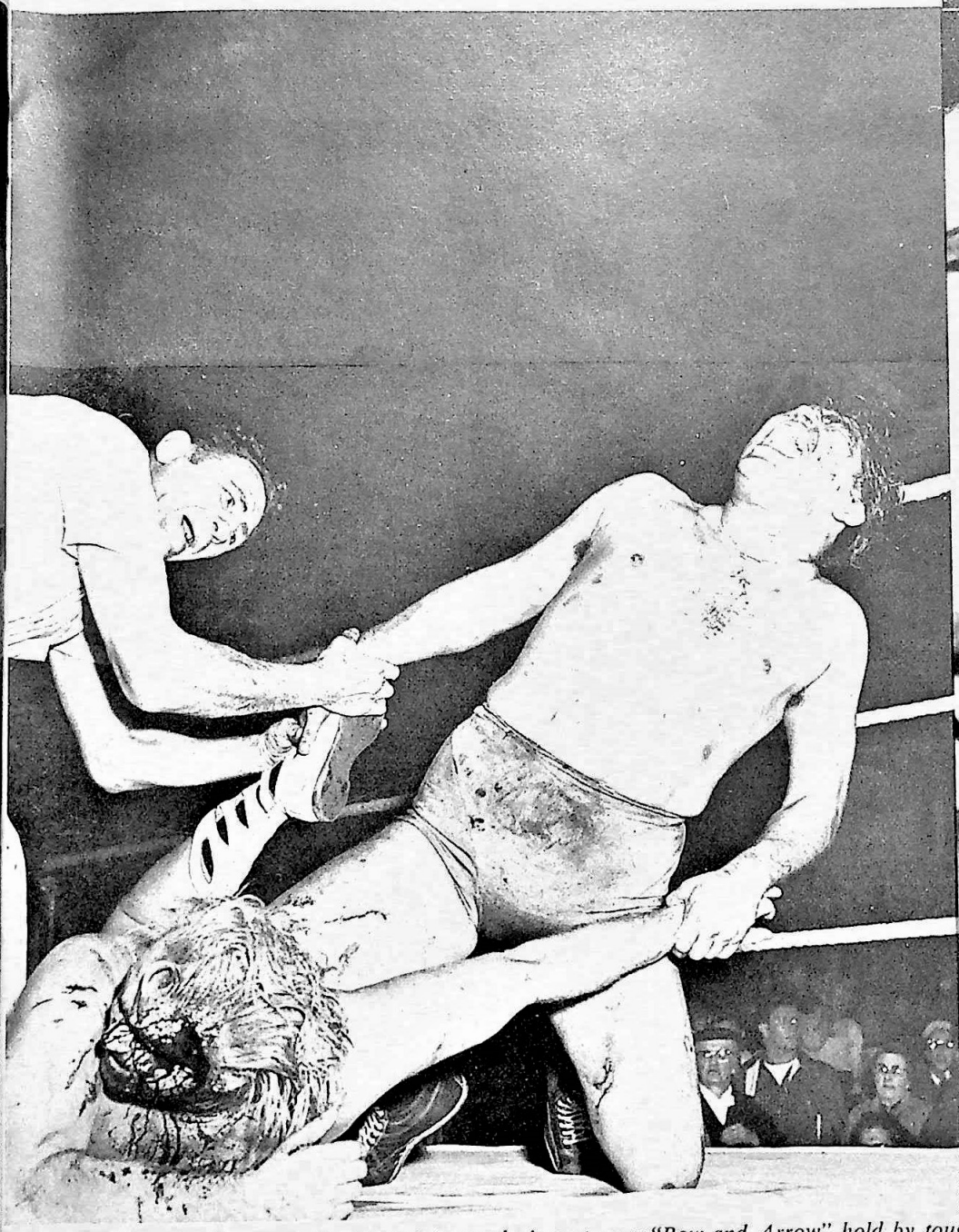
By JOSEPH PAGE

IT was a warm September night, last year, when Jerry and Eddie Graham left the ring in Washington, D.C.'s Capitol Arena after making the night even warmer with their scorching display of fireworks against the "hero" team of Don Curtis and Mark Lewin. In addition to an assortment of illegal holds, punches, kicks in the groin and elbows in the teeth, the psychotic Grahams had resorted to the hurling of chairs and strangulation by ring ropes. All of which combined to nail a resounding defeat on Curtis and Lewin.

It also created a tough job for the special police whose duty it was to get the Grahams safely back to their dressing room. But this time they didn't succeed. As the flying wedge of cops preceded the blond bombshells up the aisle, 5,000 fans roared their contempt for the hated villains. "We want blood!" they yelled.

They got it. Near the end of the

BLEED REAL BLOOD



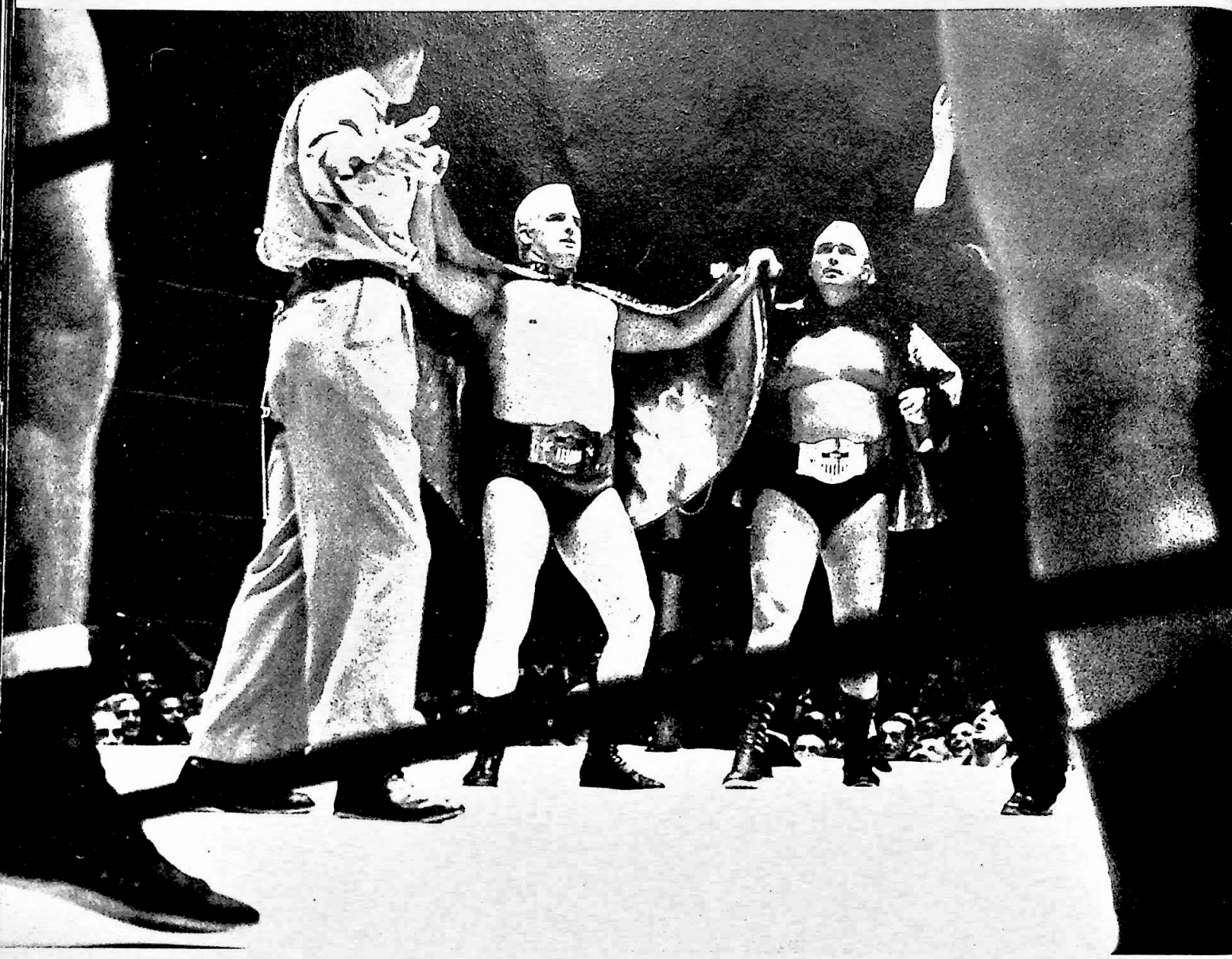
Jerry, his face a mask of blood, is caught in torturous "Bow and Arrow" hold by tough Chief Big Heart. Referee stopped match.

aisle an irate fan broke through the police line. Standing stock still in the path of 260-pound Jerry Graham, a wild-eyed man growled a biting curse word. Then he raised his right hand and swung at the oncoming, elder Graham. Jerry felt a sharp burning sensation in his left side, figured the man had brushed him with a cigarette butt. Shoving his tormentor aside like a small child, Jerry continued on out of the arena and into the dressing room. There he was shocked to see his sweaty blue ring trunks soaked through and through with warm red blood—his blood. It ran down his legs and into his leather wrestling shoes.

No cigarette butt had caused that six-inch gash just above his left kidney. It required more than a dozen stitches to close and it kept Jerry The Terrible out of action more than six weeks.

Unusual? Not for Jerry Graham. Nor for his kid brother, Eddie. Accurate

THE GRAHAMS BLEED REAL BLOOD



Spectacular entrance into ring of Jerry, right, and brother Eddie in New York's Madison Square Garden.

statistics reveal that if all the blood that has flowed from the veins of the Graham Brothers these past years were poured into a single pot, these most villainous of wrestling's bizarre army of villains could break the bank at Monte Carlo . . . the blood bank, that it.

Chief Big Heart, a Graham hater from 'way back, and a well known blood dispenser himself, estimates that for every pint the Grahams donate to the Red Cross, they squander a quart in the ring. "I've seen that rat Eddie bleed continuously for half an hour," the Chief said in disgust. "And you can forget all that baloney about blood capsules—no capsule ever leaked that long!"

It is generally agreed that if the Grahams have nothing else, they do have tremendous color—and the color is not always red. They have something else, too. Brains, for one thing. Among his other accomplishments, Jerry claims a Ph.D. This puts him in high company; but then Jerry the Great has been living high on the hog for a long time now—ever since he quit being a hypnotist and took to dismembering his fellow men.

The senior Graham (two years older than Eddie) is an animated A-Bomb in and out of the ring. He doesn't need a degree to know that flamboyant promotion on the outside means plenty of meat and potatoes on the inside. And the big guy needs plenty inside. At 260, Jerry is about 50 pounds overweight (100 pounds, according to many of his opponents who have sunk their fists six

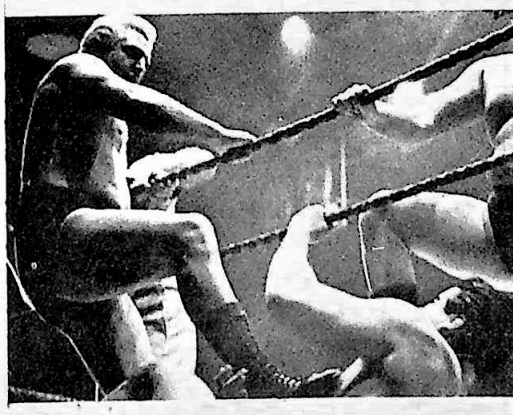
Jerry's favorite weapon is to drop his 260 *pounds off top rope across the body of helpless victim. Eddie is at left.*

inches into his capacious paunch without finding bottom). Even this added avourdoupois (fat) which results in a grotesque, Buddha-like appearance, is an important part of the Grahams' riotous performances. It makes the fans detest Jerry even more than they might if he were stream-lined.

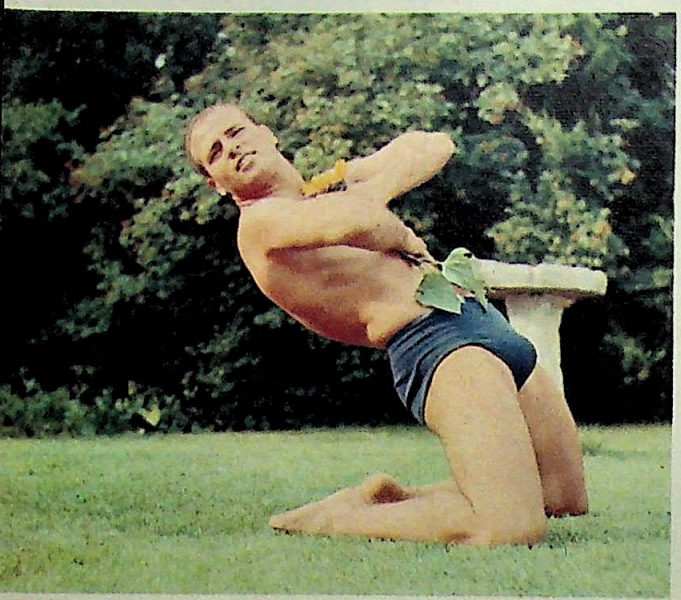
There is no doubt that the most nauseating sight in wrestling today is Jerry Graham's fabulous fan-tail, flip-flopping across the ring before—or after—a bout. It, coupled with the sublime arrogance of his features, is enough to make women faint and strong men weep. It can even start a riot. It did, many times. It can go so far as to cause wrestliing to be banned in one of the fifty states. And it damned near *did*!

Who will ever forget—even if they wanted to—that memorable night in Madison Square Garden when Jerry, aided by his then partner, Dick "The Bruiser" Afflis, made "shredded feet"

(*continued on page* 73)



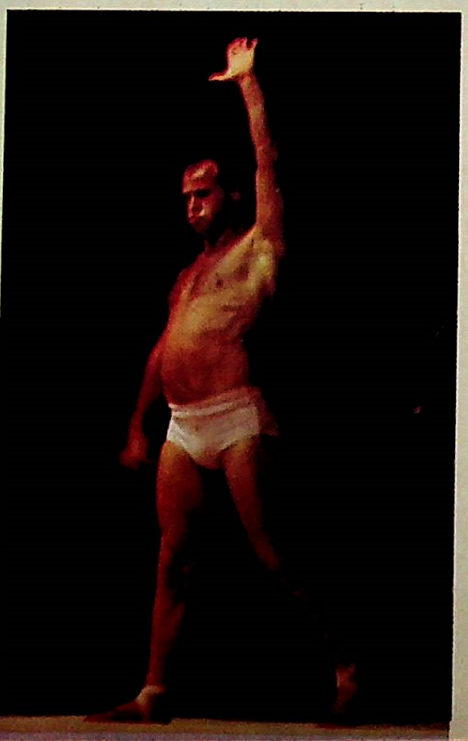
FABULOUS RICKI STARR



Starr, who is impervious to his surroundings, stops in public park to caress a sun flower.

In a business where imitation is the rule rather then the exception, young Ricki Starr glows like an original which is beyond duplication.

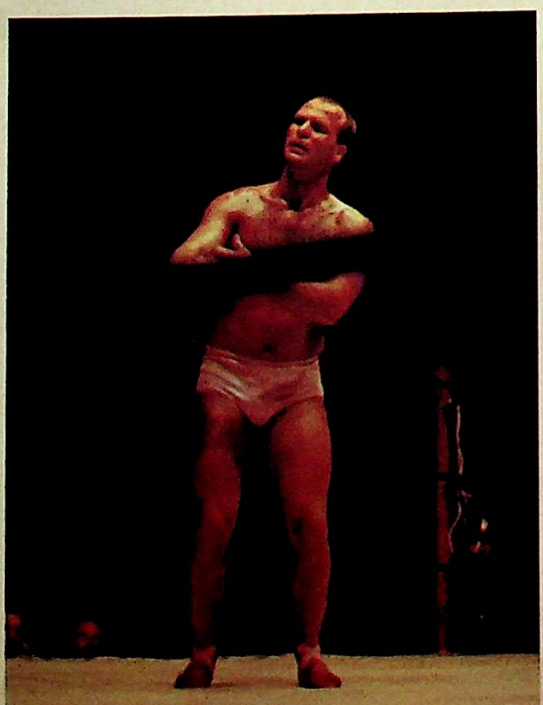
Ricki mimics goose-stepping opponent Karl Von Hess, brings roar from crowd.

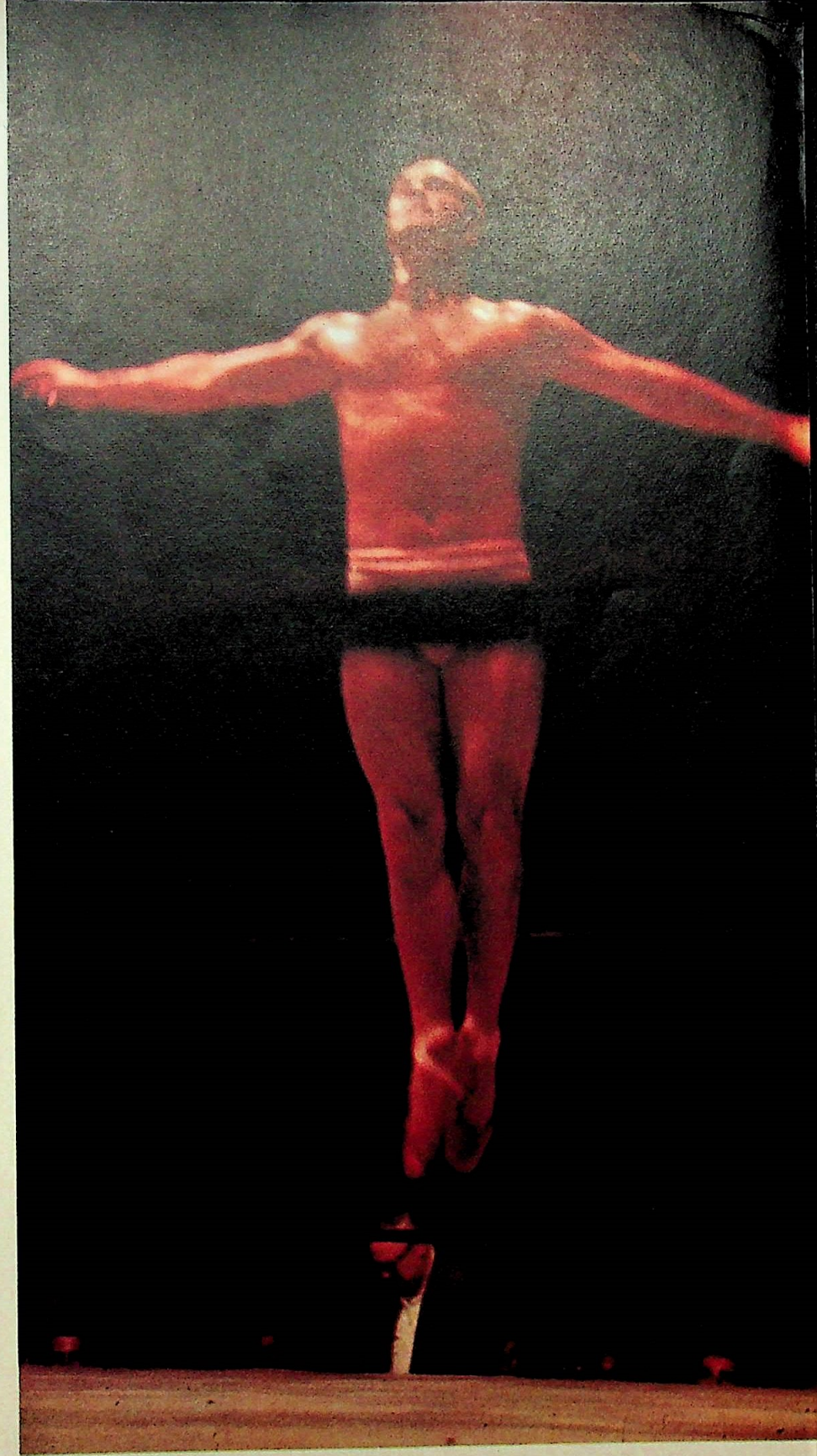


Starr circles pleading opponent Von Hess prior to launching attack which brought him victory. Few people realize that Ricki is an expert wrestler.

NO wrestler of recent times has caused so much heated controversy as 24-year old Ricki Starr of St. Louis, Missouri. He has been called, among other things, a disgrace; a freak; a bizarre *mixture;* a genius. Actually, however, Ricki is a frustrated ballet dancer and a strict individualist who found in wrestling a means of self-expression unavailable to him in any other medium. Starr is a master showman who toys with the emotions of his audience as a cat plays with a ball of yarn. He wears ballet slippers instead of customary wrestling shoes, pastel-colored trunks, or, on special occasions, a skin-tight leotard. He squirms, wiggles and shakes his trim, rock-hard body to a hot tempo and taunts his opponents by streaking around the ring so fast they can't lay a hand on him. Although other wrestlers have tried doing take-offs on Starr, no one thus far has even approached his dazzling techniques, or come close to generating the warmth of his infectious All-American boy grin.

Angered by opponent's foul tactics, Ricki threatened to punch him in face. He did.





Starr's remarkable gracefulness is evident as he executes perfect pirouette during bout. He calls this photo "the finest picture ever taken of me."

THE ROCCA PLAN TO PREVENT WAR

A startling and revolutionary idea from the world's finest athlete.

by OSCAR CANNON

"I *hereby challenge the greatest wrestler in Russia to a finish match!*"

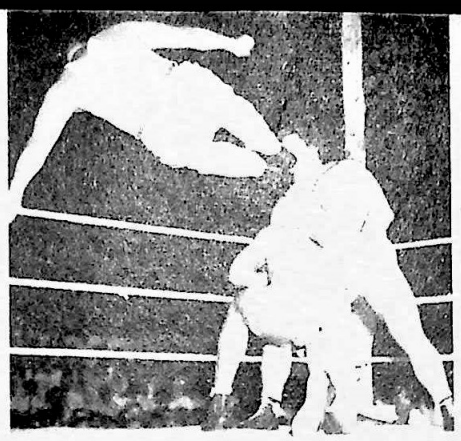
The above statement was made during an exclusive interview with this magazine. It was made by Antonino Rocca.

Known as one of history's greatest athletes, Rocca now proves that he may be a great statesman as well. WRESTLING REVUE is proud that he has chosen these pages on which to outline his amazing plan that could possibly provide the long sought after answer for curing the world's ills.

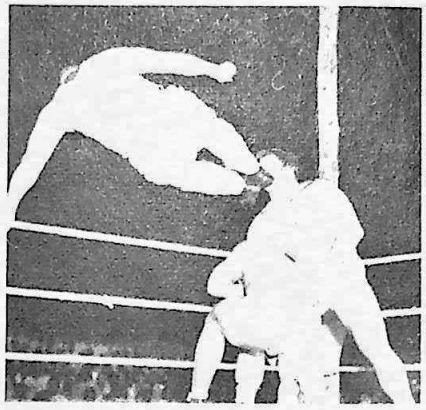
Any ordinary athlete proposing such an idea, would only be laughed at. But there's nothing ordinary about Antonino Rocca, as everbody

(*continued on page 74*)

A WRESTLING FAN STRIKES BACK!



Send Rocca back to Argentina! Keep women at least five rows back! These are but a few opinions of outspoken critic Charles Albrecht who has been watching wrestling since 1904.



A WRESTLING FAN STRIKES BACK

Q. Mr. Albrecht, how long have you been a wrestling fan?

A. Since 1904. The year I saw my first match. It was between Frank Gotch and Tom Jenkins for the American heavyweight championship. Gotch won. And, may I add, I haven't seen a better match since.

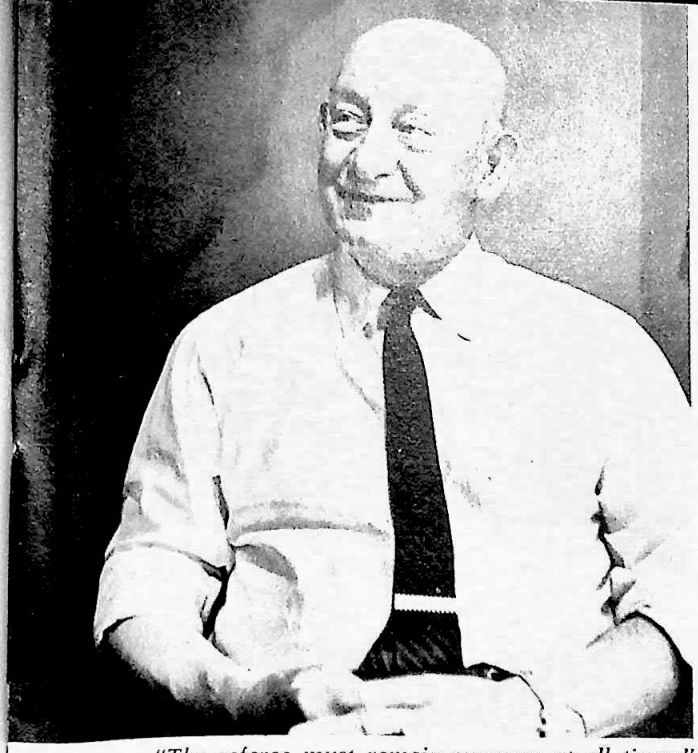
Q. In your opinion how would the modern day stars stack up against fellows like Gotch, Hackenschmidt, Stecher and Earl Caddock?

A. The modern boys would be stacked up all right. Like piles of cord wood. Although I must admit that I have seen a couple of guys in recent years who might have held their own, for a little while, that is. I'm talking about guys like Bok Geigel, Lou Kim and maybe Sandor Szabo. Maybe Szabo is too old now. But in his day he was great. Also some of the college kids who turn wrestler become very good. I hate to say it, but Ricki Starr is a perfect example.

Q. Why do you hate to say it?

A. Because I personally think Starr is the most revolting human being, next to Jack the Ripper, that ever walked the earth. I know nothing about Starr's personal life, and I couldn't care less, but the impression he creates in the ring is a brazen burlesque of all *real* men. He insults every man every time he gets into the ring. But what makes it seem such a shame is that Starr is really an excellent wrestler.

"Of course you have great boys today."



"The referee must remain supreme at all times."

"If any wrestler touches a referee he must be banned!"

Q. No doubt your opinion is shared by many people. But, nevertheless, don't you agree that Starr puts on a tremendous show that gives pleasure to thousands. And if that's the style he prefers, isn't it within his rights to use it?

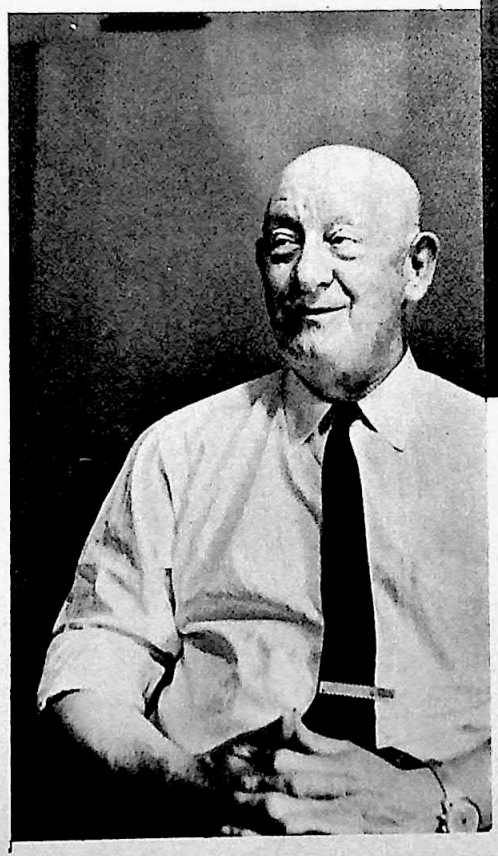
A. That is absolutely true. What he does is his business. But I'd never pay a dime to watch him. That's my business.

Q. Are there any other well known wrestlers you dislike besides Starr?

A. Yes. There is one I detest just as much. That flying fish, Antonino Rocca. I wonder who that guy thinks he's kidding! And don't look so surprised. Most of my friends agree that Rocca should be put aboard the next transportation back to Argentina, forcibly if necessary; — ship, plane, raft, even water skiis. Anything to get him the hell out of sight.

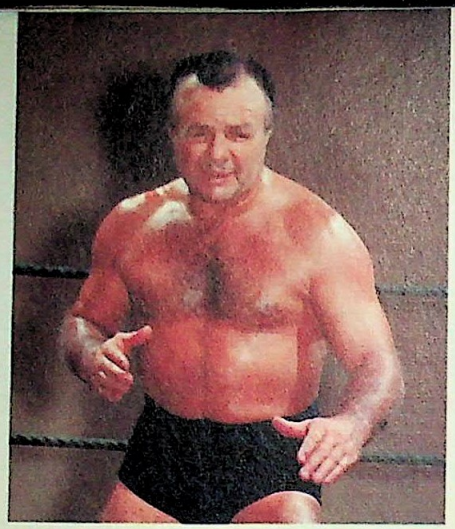
(*continued on page* 73)

"I have yet to see a better match than Gotch-Jenkins bout of 1904."

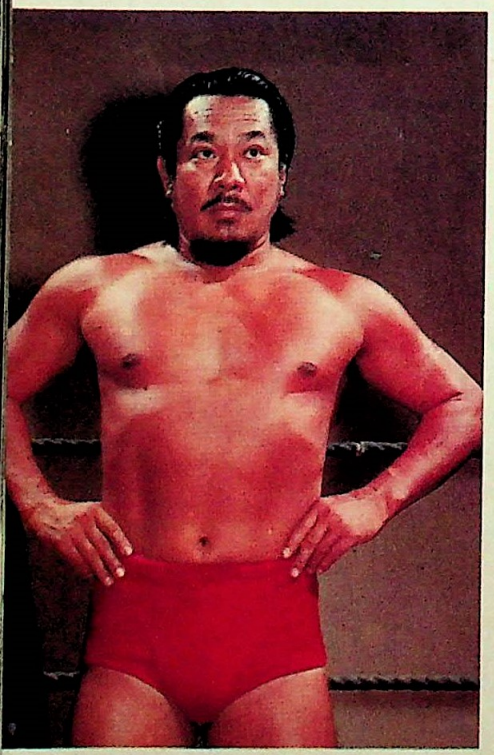


"If I were granted one wish, I would send that Rocca back to Argentina!"

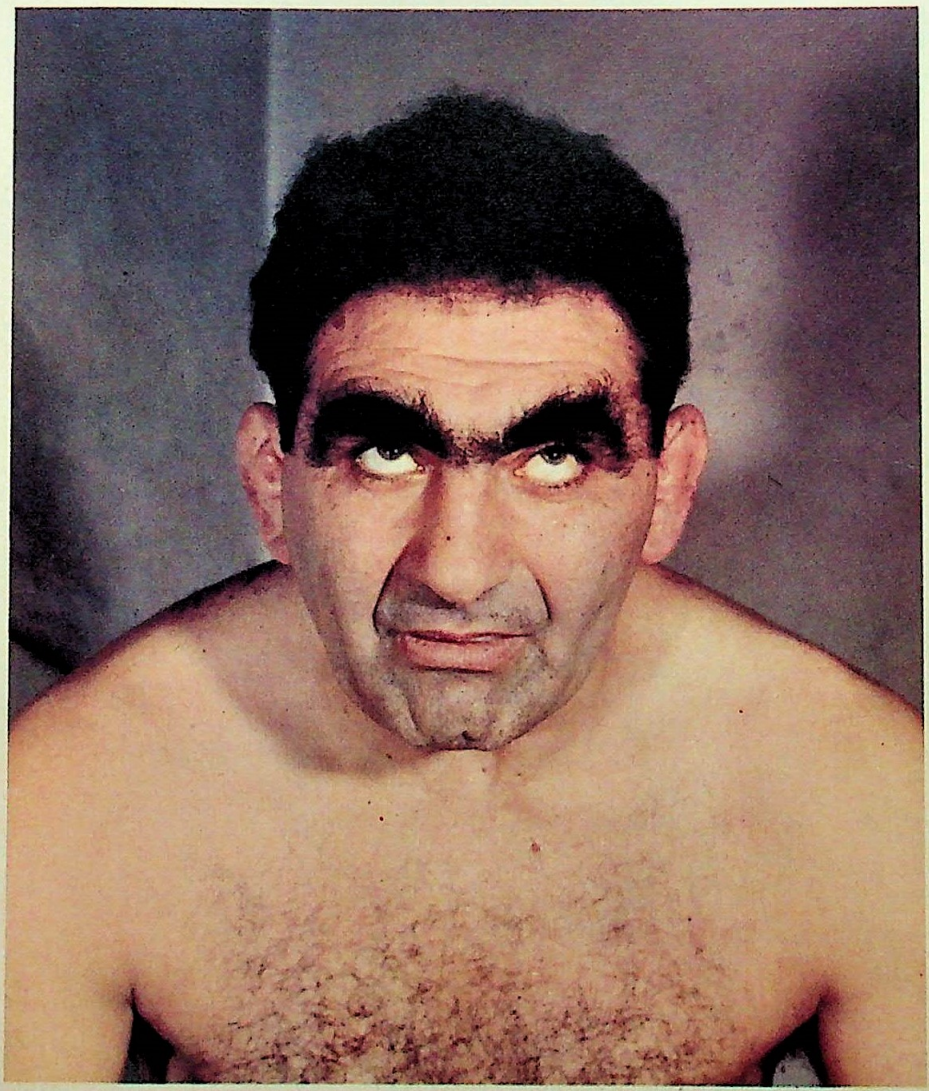
Wrestling's Murderous VILLA



Battle-scarred Danny McShane is one of wrestling's truly great performers.



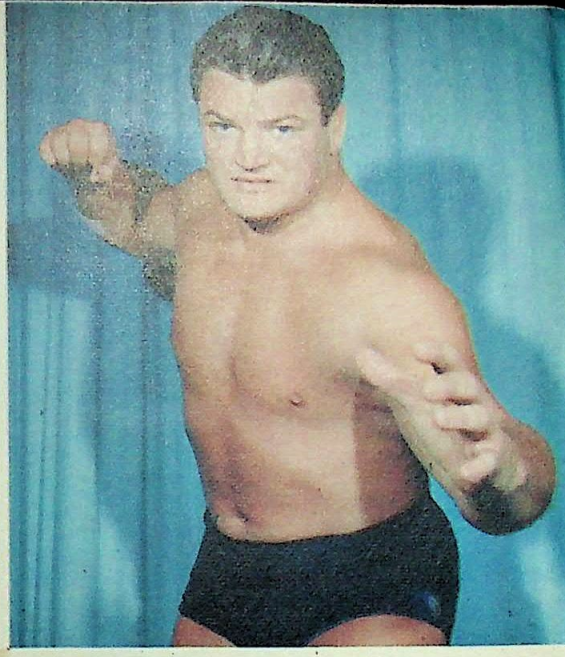
Japanese judo expert Omaya Kato is small in size but very tough.



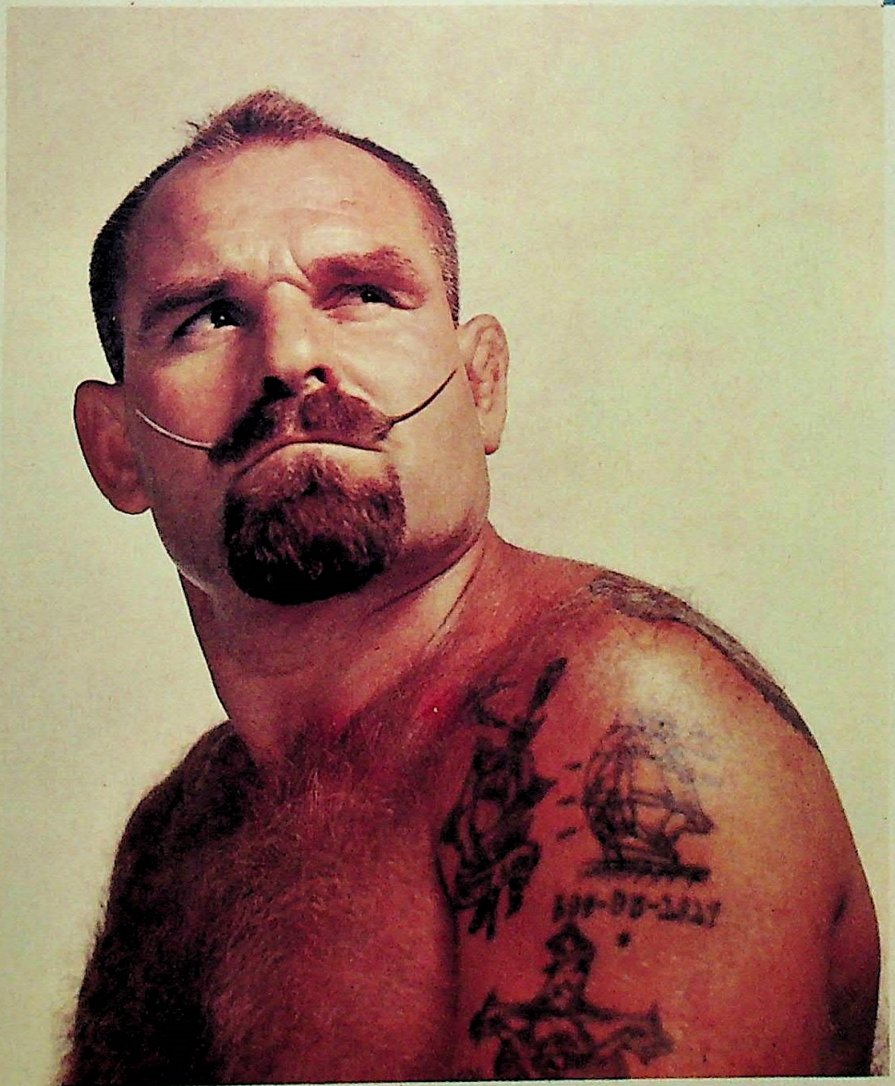
Bull Curry, whose ferocious face has earned him a fortune, has probably splintered more chairs over more heads than anybody.

NS

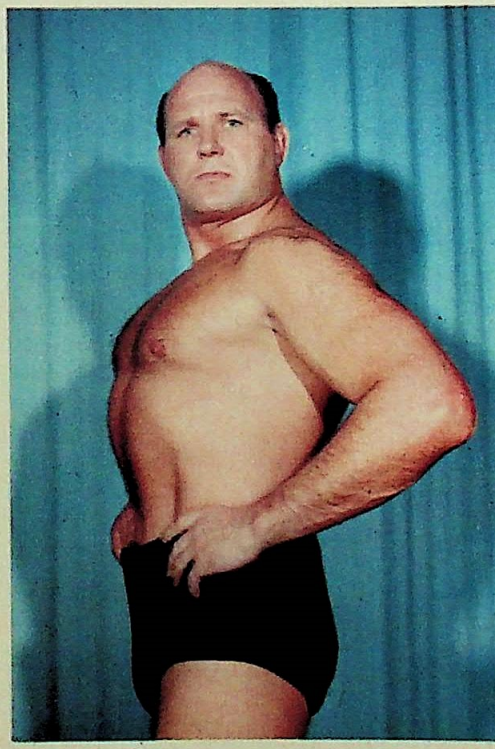
You curse them, you heave rotten fruit at them and you try to trip them as they streak down the aisle. But don't ever forget that without the grizzly villains, wrestling would be boring to watch.



Don Leo Jonathan, 305 pounds, 6 feet 6, is one of wrestling's most powerful bullies.



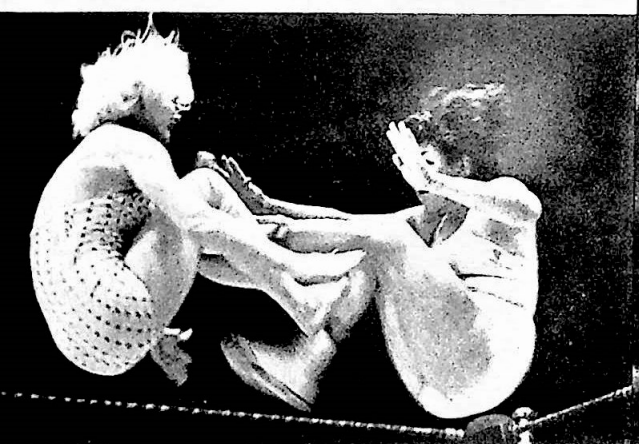
Proud, vicious Karl Von Hess earned more than $100,000 last year with his savage tirades in the ring. He is a German aristocrat.



Nobody can enrage a crowd as easily as b burly ex-football star Hard Boiled Hagger

Girl WRESTLING

It's all a matter of opinion— . . . And position, too.



Joint mid-air attacks by Judy Grable, left, and the famous Fabulous Moolah.

Moolah clamps Grable in flying head scissors and whips her to the canvas.

WHAT IS GIRL WRESTLING?

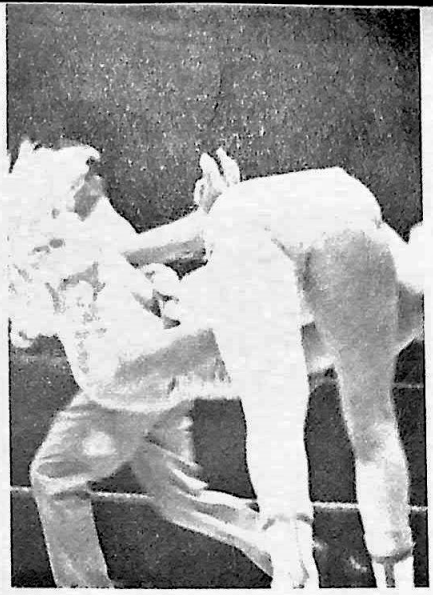
Ask the question of a dozen different people—you'll get a dozen different answers.

A Brooklyn fan: "For me those gals take the place of the Dodgers! They're just as daffy, just as lovable and a lot more sexier. Instead of the Duke (Snider) belting out a home run, you see Judy Grable blast Slave Girl Moolah out of the ring. And instead of insultin' the umpire, they rough up the ref! It's great, chum, great!"

A High School sophomore: "Gee, I don't know eggzactly what I like about them, but, boy, they sure do things to you—don't they? You see a couple of those snazzy-built girls in there knocking each other around, and—well, I mean it *does* things to you! You know what I mean?"

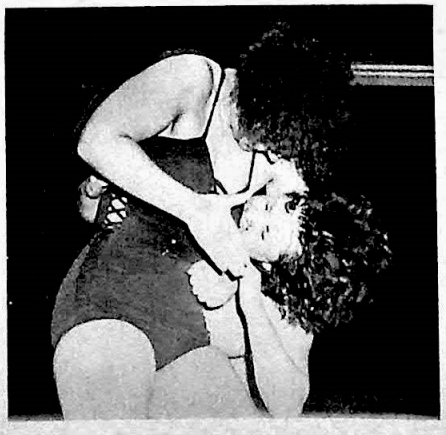
A Greenwich Village Beatnik: "Man, those babes play it cool and it comes out hot. I mean they're far out, with a beat in their feet! When they send each other through the ropes, they send me, period, man—makes me want to hang myself! Fact is, I once knew a gal wrestler named Nelson, and she was playing tag with a team of real hard man types; well, one grabbed one of her legs and the other grabbed t'other leg and they both pulled real hard, man, but *hard!* You guessed it—from then on she was a *half* Nelson! Get it, she was—Okay, buddy, you needn't get nasty about it!"

A Bronx Housewife: "Look, I get my kicks where I can—and no wise remarks, please! I like to see these so-called females smack each other around because what the hell, when my old man slugs me with an empty beer bottle, it gives me a lonely, rejected feeling. Watching those dames do the same to each other makes me realize I'm not alone in this world, and I all of a sudden feel warm inside, y'know?"



Bare-footed Judy Grable is capable of performing amazing acrobatics.

Complex tangle of girls and referee.



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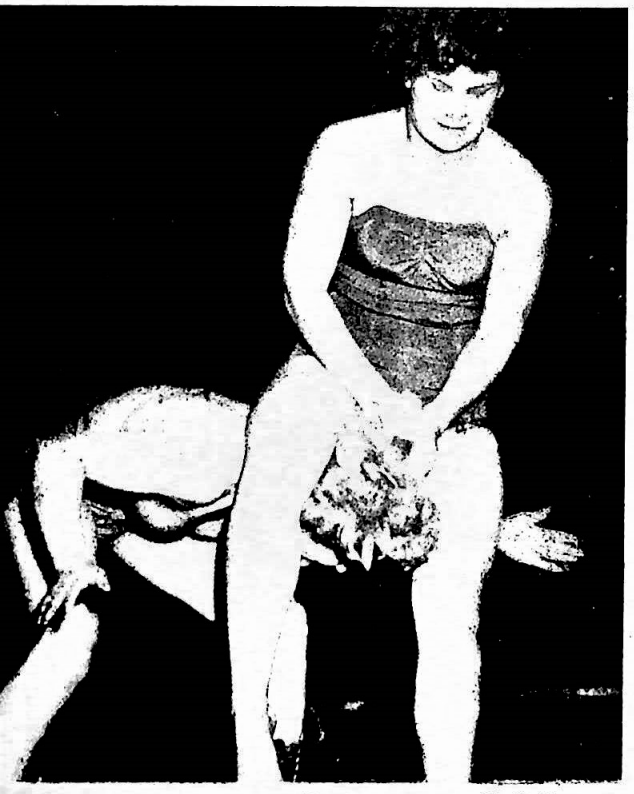
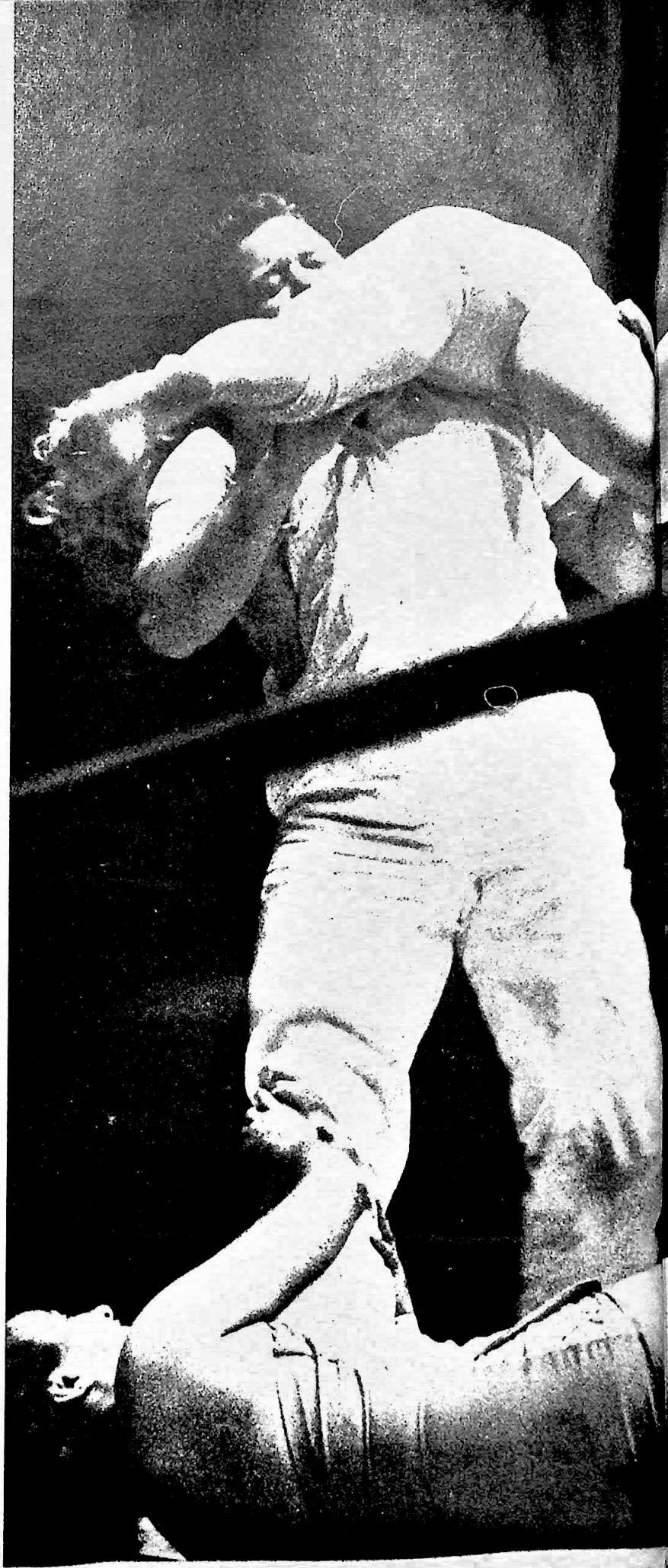
Employee of the Psychiatric Ward, Bellevue Hospital: "There's no doubt about it—watching two women wrestlers violently engage each other in close bodily contact furnishes a sexual outlet and substitute gratification that is both wholesome and frustrating--but it's any port in a storm eh? Now, excuse me—I'm on my way to the Arena. Lorraine Johnson is taking on June Byers tonight and—What? Why, yes, as it happens, I *am* a bachelor."

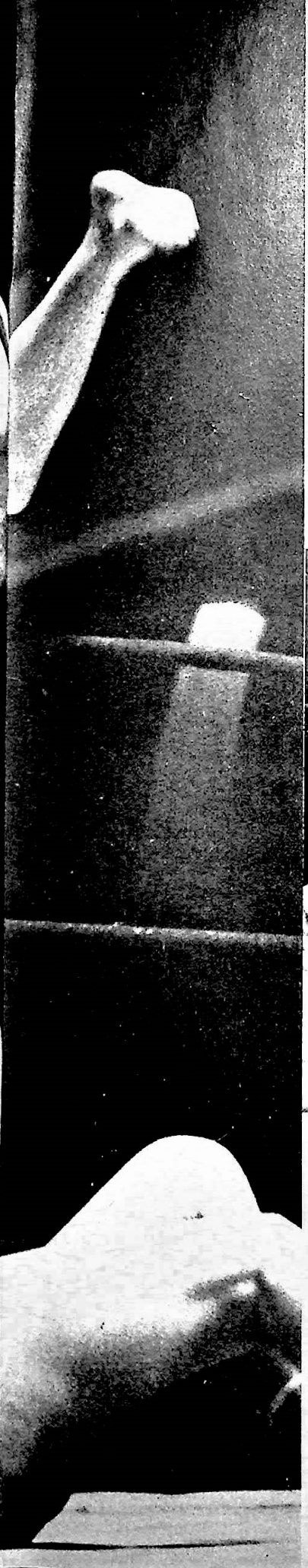
The Editor: We think all of the above reasons make sense. But we have our own reason. Watching girl wrestlers is *fun*—which makes it okay with us.

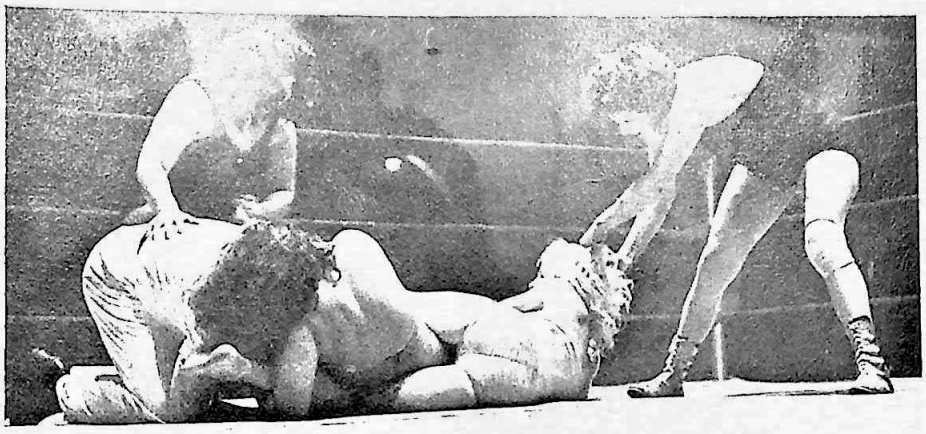


Lilly Bitter traps Nell Stewart.

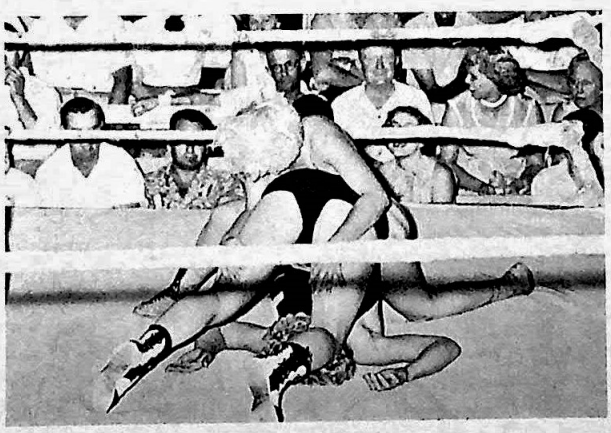
No dentist was ever this rough.



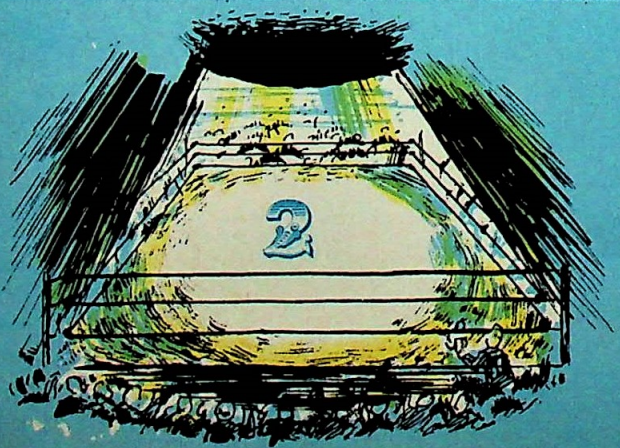




When four girls swing into action in a tag bout anything can happen, and does.

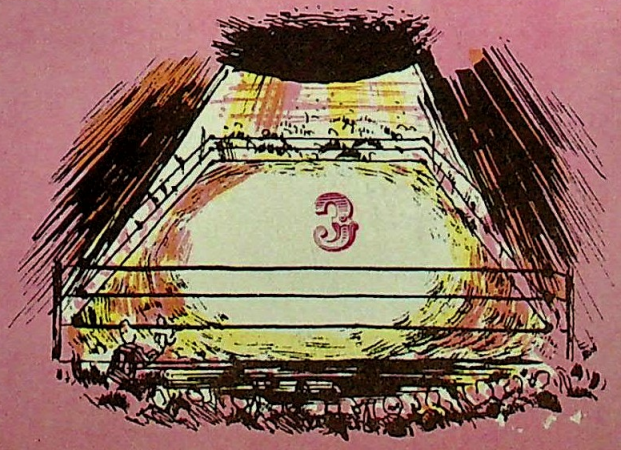


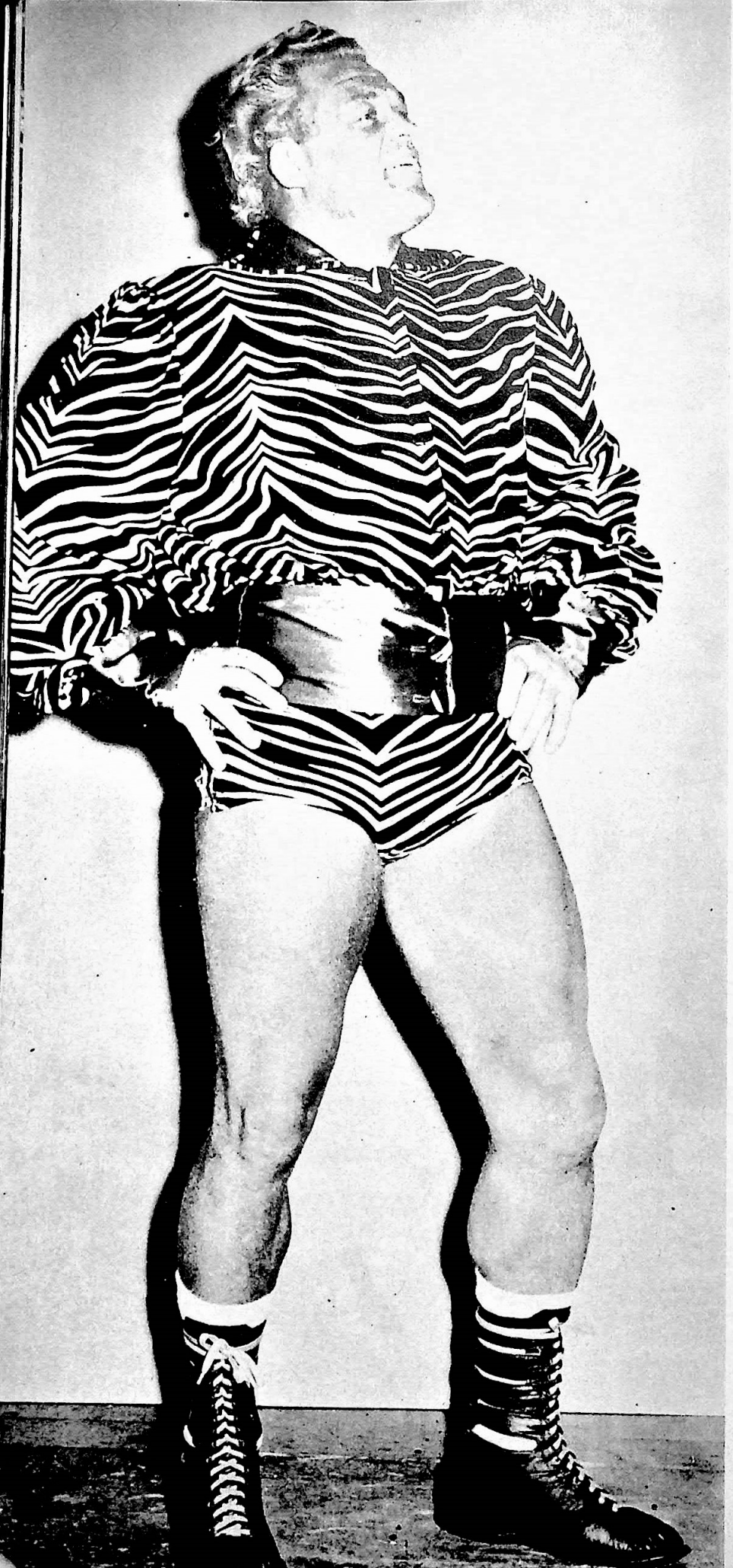
Ella Waldak, bottoms up, assumes weird position as she tries to wiggle away from attacking blond, Nell Stewart.



BARBARA BAKER came out of the West Virginia hills six years ago determined to become a wrestler. She looked up Billy Wolfe, the man who made lady wrestling a multi-million dollar a year business, pleaded for and got her chance. Wolfe gave her $50 a week, room and board and schooled her carefully in the many complex maneuvers of this most dangerous of all competitive sports for women. She was a sensation from the start with her spectacular assortment of flying tackles and drop kicks. Today Baker is considered one of the five top stars in the business, has a yearly income of about $40,000.

THE FABULOUS KANGAROOS are without doubt the most novel tag team in the world, and certainly one of the most colorful. The Kangaroos are actually Roy Heffernan and Al Costello, a pair of Australian powerhouses who teamed up in 1957 and have been laying both opponents and fans in the aisles ever since. Their style is fast, rough and thrilling to watch since somebody is always flying through the air when the Kangaroos are around. To add to the flavor, they carry real boomerangs into the ring, threaten to brain anyone who gets in their way. Often they flip small cardboard boomerangs into the audience.





PAUL DeGALLES WRESTLING'S FASHION PLATE

Zebra stripes and leopard spots dazzle the crowds and make big business . . .

Wrestlers give many different reasons for taking up their rugged profession, but probably Paul De Galles' is the most unusual. "It was a toss up between hockey and wrestling," says the transplanted Frenchman (transplanted to Canada). "I decided wrestlers wore the more stylish clothes—so I chose wrestling!"

Paul, a top all-around athlete in France, loves only one thing more than athletics: clothing. Not just ordinary clothing, but the kind fashion designers make just one of and then throw away because it's twenty years before its time. Or twenty years *behind* the times. De Galles grabs these up and even has the garment district making them up special.

Both in and out of the ring, this not-so-well-known wrestler is a beacon of sartorial splendor. Zebra stripes and leopard spots dazzle the eyes of the crowd. Something dazzles the eyes of Paul's opponents as well, because he wins the majority of his bouts.

Yes, De Galles can wrestle! He can wrestle well enough to gain the admiration of such famous stars as Ronnie Etchison, Nick Bockwinkle and Bill Melby. These and a number of other top wrestlers agree that Paul's genuine skill, together with his violent, explosive and unpredictable nature, make him a very dangerous man to face on the canvas—or in a bar, for that matter. The fellow's tough.

No doubt other audiences, those in the South, West and Middle Atlantic, will discover just how dangerous De Galles really is, as he branches out his activities. The fans will love it, for the Frenchman is a crowd pleaser. His opponents won't—for the only wrestler De Galles pleases is himself. He also pleases his tailor. Just about everybody is going to hear more of *this* one!

WRESTLING MUST HAVE A GENUINE CHAMPION

(*continued from page* 7)

shooting matches was held, Ed Strangler Lewis against Lee Wycoff. Remember, this was a match sanctioned and recognized by the New York State Athletic Commission. "This bout," said Commissioner John Phelan to Lewis and Wycoff, "is to a finish. Wrestle forever if you have to; whoever wins is the Champion!"

ALTHOUGH the general public was welcome in this case, only a handful showed up. Why? Figure it out. Here is how wrestling was carried on in the "good" old days. The audience made bets on the matches, yes—but not on who would win. They bet on who would get behind the other first! In championship wrestling, this is very important. They also bet on who would hit the canvas first; *not* a fall, mind you—just touch the canvas!

How long do you think it took for men like Lewis and Wycoff to get behind the other? They *didn't!* They stood facing each other for a full two hours, with neither having any advantage. Neither of them hit the canvas. When it was past midnight, stubborn Commissioner Phelan was still determined to stick this wrestling filibuster out to the bitter end. He folded his arms and gritted his teeth, and sat there staring at the two men in the ring. At exactly 12:10 Lewis decided he'd had it! Suddenly he got a bear hug on Wycoff and whispered to him, "Look—my train leaves at 1 o'clock. Let's get this goddam thing over with!" Wycoff nodded eagerly. Lewis lifted Wycoff, who was still in the bear hug, to the edge of the ring. There he leaned forward —and both of them still locked together, fell through the ropes and down onto the floor! While Phelan, fuming helplessly, railed and stormed, the two refused to climb back into the ring. So far as they were concerned, it was a draw!

Lewis, it is said, made his train.

Now remember that these two fine wrestlers did their very best against each other for two full hours—and in that time they did nothing more than face each other, grunt and spar for an opening—an opening that never came. This, you see, is what all wrestling matches would be if staged according to official rules. They would be about as interesting to watch as two turtles running the 100-yard dash. Think you'd like it? Can you imagine 18,000 fans watching such a crashing bore at Madison Squre Garden? Or millions of TV viewers keeping it tuned in longer than a few minutes? Of course, it would be out of the question!

All right. So what do we do about it? What do we do about bringing back a little dignity to professional wrestling. About creating a genuine champion?

First let's decide what we *can't* do. We can't go back to the old sleep-provoking shooting matches. That was a clumsy way to make a champion and it always made the public suspicious anyway. We can't elect a champion on the basis of popularity polls by the fans. Because that would mean that if Tab Hunter or one of those rock-and-roll singers turned wrestler, he could lose every match and still be elected champion by the votes of the teen-agers! Theoretically, anyway.

Seriously, this is what we can and *must* do—otherwise wrestling is going to die. We must name a Central Wrestling Commission made up of members of the various State Athletic Commissions. It would have the same function as the National Wrestling Alliance except that it would be composed of officially appointed commissioners, not promoters.

Each commission — including one for each Canadian Province—would submit the name of the best wrestler in his region—according to popularity, record, rating and whatever other standard makes a wrestler "big." Then an elimination would narrow the district winner down to, say, three regional winners—Eastern, Central and Western. The matches between these various regional winners would add to the enjoyment and spirit, and the final contestants could then meet in a large city in the "payoff" match which would determine the genuine world's champion!

As for the title's changing hands, this would come about whenever the votes of the various commissions showed that a strong contender had proved his right to a title bout. Then the match for the title would be staged. It would be a straight shooting match! That's right—experience, plus the desire of the fans, proves that this is the only method of determining a rightful champion — *with certain differences from the old system.* Here's how it would be done:

The shooting match—the official title bout—would be held in a modest sized arena. The public would be invited, along with the Press. There would be no TV coverage; the resulting bout would not be good television fare. It would be too dull. *But it would determine the champion,* as decided by the officiating commissioners and appointed referee. If no pin was gained within a reasonable time, the commissioners would decide the winner by vote.

Within a specified period thereafter, another match between the same two wrestlers would be held *for the benefit of the fans only.* This would be staged in a large arena with full television coverage. This would be a free-for-all of the type that we have come to recognize as present-day wrestling. It would be vastly entertaining. It would be thrilling. It would make excellent TV programming. But it would be strictly an exhibition. The recognized champion, who would already have won his title in the shooting match, would win again. This match would merely serve to *introduce* him to the world in his new role as Champion.

I think that this is the best of several possible plans. If this method—or one like it—is accepted, then there is no doubt that wrestling would take on the same air of respectability it enjoyed in the days of Frank Gotch. It would win new fans and keep the old. With a genuine champion it would rise a notch in the estimation of the press and so receive more extensive newspaper coverage.

We have submitted our plan to many influential persons in wrestling. With few exceptions they approve. But they wonder how it can be put into effect. There is only one way.

If you, the most important element of wrestling—the fan—want to see this plan put into effect, let us know. And let your State Athletic Commission know, too. Your letters and telegrams will do it. The best letters, in the opinion of the editors, will be published in a future issue of this magazine.

Send your letters to:

Champion Editor
Champion Sports Publishing Corp.
545 Fifth Avenue—Room 609
New York 17, N. Y. ● *end*

THE UNBEATABLE TEAM OF VARGA & VARGA

(*continued from page* 10)

they first met.

That event took place sixteen years ago at a party. "I thought Billy was a real wolf," said Rosebud during her two-hour eulogy, "and he sure acted like one, eyeing and ogling me and demanding my telephone number. But then I realized that he ogled *only* me and asked for *my* telephone number. He acted like there were no other girls around. Then I started to take notice. And I've been doing it ever since."

It's a great thing for a husband to find a wife who agrees that marriage is a fifty-fifty proposition. But Billy Varga is doubly blessed. "I think marriage is a 70-30 deal —in favor of the husband," sighed Rosebud. No girl should get married until she finds the man who can be seventy percent of her life! I suppose it's all but impossible; maybe I was just lucky."

So was Billy. He managed to interrupt his bride (he still thinks of her as such) long enough to start a new subject. "I remember the first time she saw me wrestle. It wasn't until after we'd been married a year. I forget who I wrestled that night but I won't forget how it turned out—thanks to Rosebud. The guy gave me a body slam and I bounced two feet off the canvas. It didn't hurt much but it looked like my back was broken. Well, I heard this horrible scream from a ringside. Did I know who it was? I did. My new wife—thinking she'd lost her husband." Both Vargas laughed joyfully at this point.

"Startled, I turned to look at her," Billy continued, "I wanted her to know I was all right. Naturally, my opponent didn't let any grass grow under his feet—or under my back, either. Before I knew it I was pinned. And do you know what I thought about as the ref counted three? I thought how wonderful it was for Rosebud to worry about me like that!"

"And," chimed in Rosebud, "I still do. Only I don't show it so much any more. Why, when I was expecting Royce, I watched Billy's matches on TV, usually with a girl friend. One night it didn't go

(*continued on page* 71)

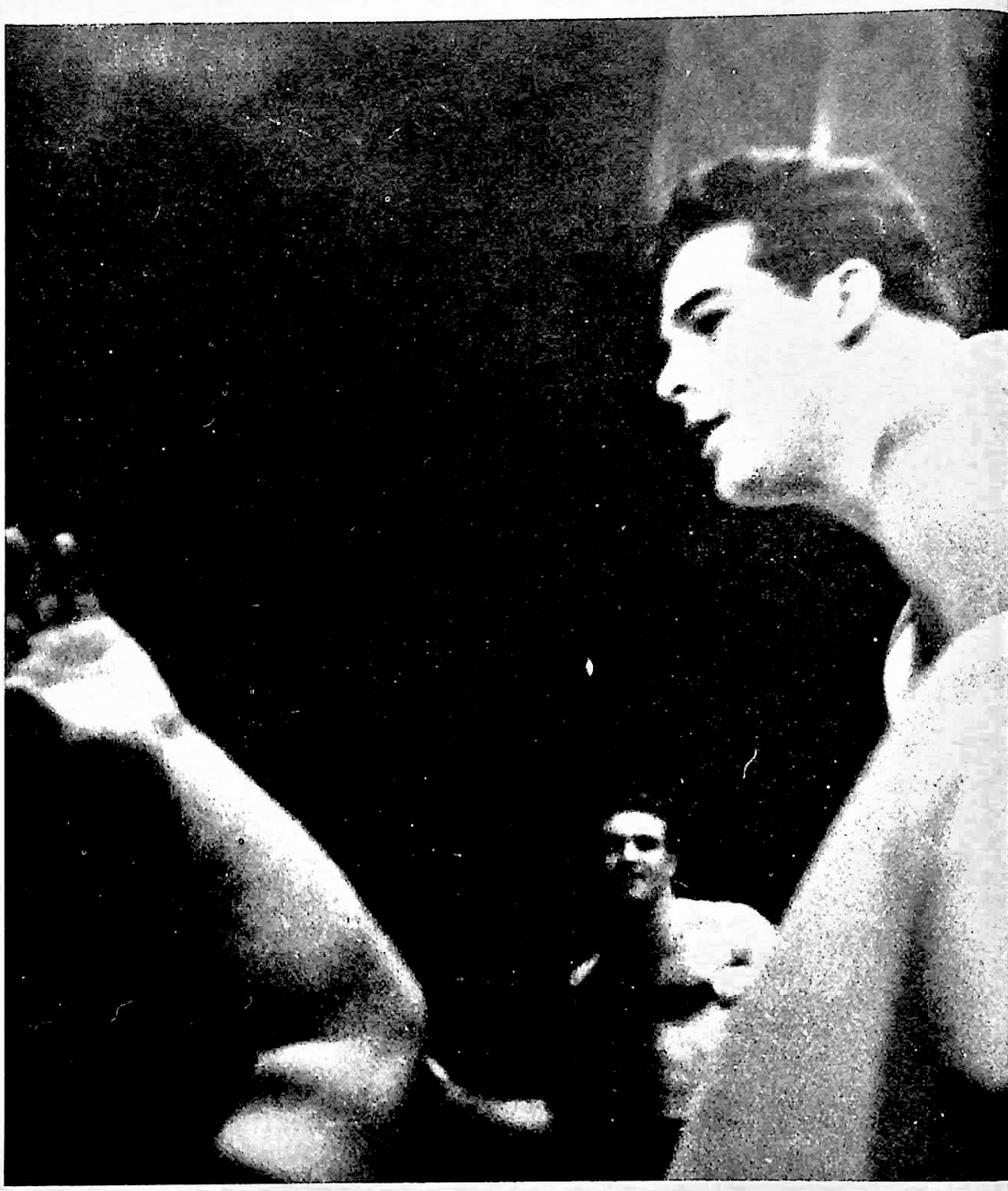
WRESTLER WITH

"Naturally I enjoy attention from girls. I'm only human!"

"Sometimes I am embarassed . . . Like when a mob runs after me."

"I get all kinds of propositions. As many as a 100 a week.

"Do I mind? Certainly not. I'd worry if things were different."



Lewin has classic features, big brown eyes, jet black hair. He is the perfect hero type; receives more fan mail (average: 1500 per week) than any other wrestler.

To find out why baby-faced Mark Lewis has so magnetic an effect on women, a Wrestling Revue writer lived with him for more than a month, observing his every move and watching in shocked amazement as female cave women fought for bits of his clothing. Here are his startling conclusions.

THE MOST SEX-APPEAL

By Stanley Weston

When Lewin is on card, women attendance soars. They suffer through every trying moment with him, wring their hands and "talk" to him.

A half dozen witnesses swear it happened recently in Columbus, Ohio. Young Mark Lewin, in town on a business trip —his business: wrestling—left his mid-town hotel for a before dinner stroll. At once a chauffeur-driven Cadillac leapt into action and, as the burly young man walked along, kept pace with him at the curb. He didn't notice it until a frantic stage whisper came from the Limousine, *"Mark!* Please come here!" A sultry blonde, as sleek and expensive-looking as the car she rode in, beckoned from the rear window.

The 230-pound six footer, shrugging helplessly, walked slowly over to the Cadillac. "Yes, Miss?"

The lady—Mark describes her as a "sort of cross between Marilyn Monroe and Marlene Dietrich"—turned her soulful blue

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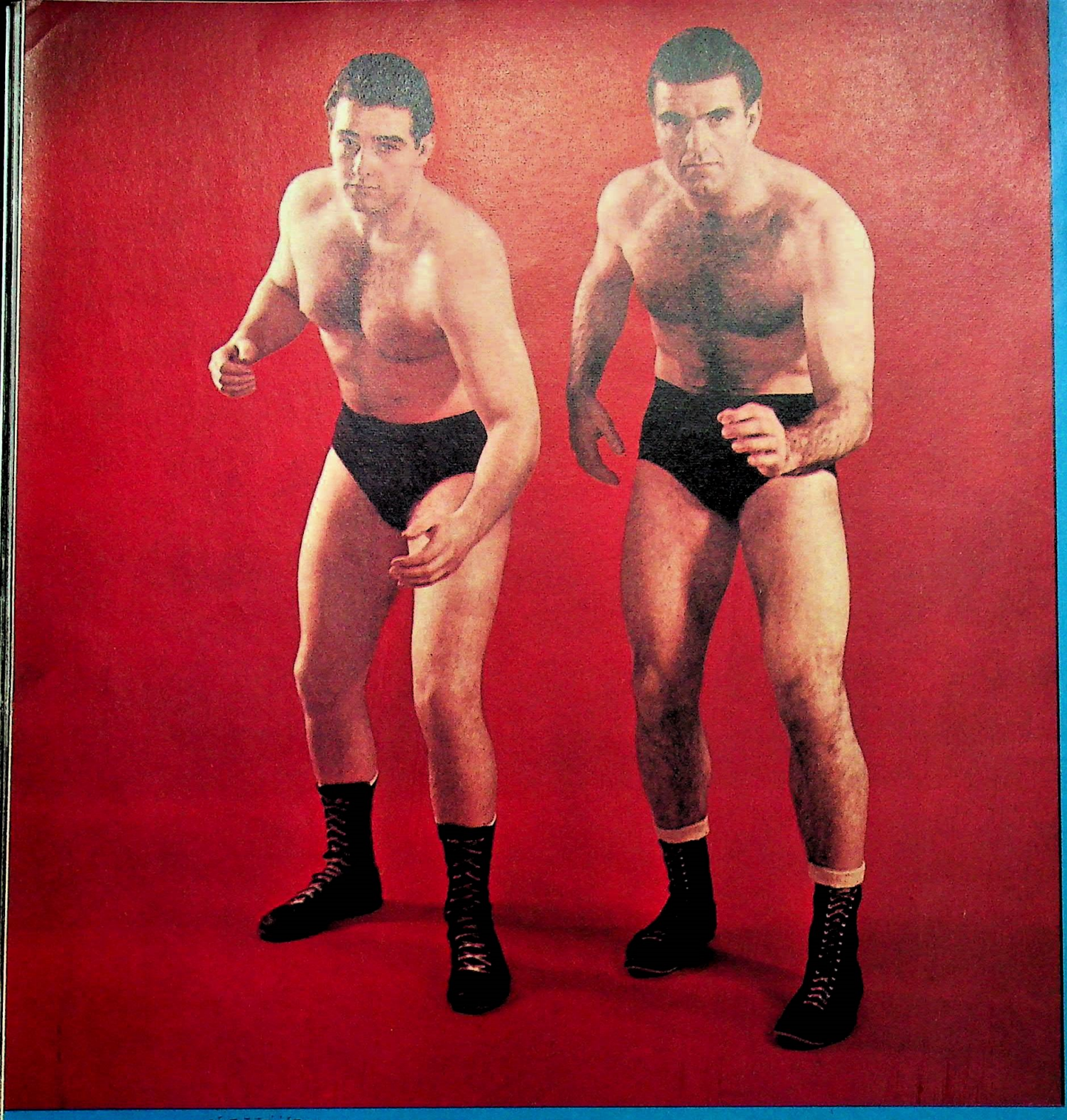
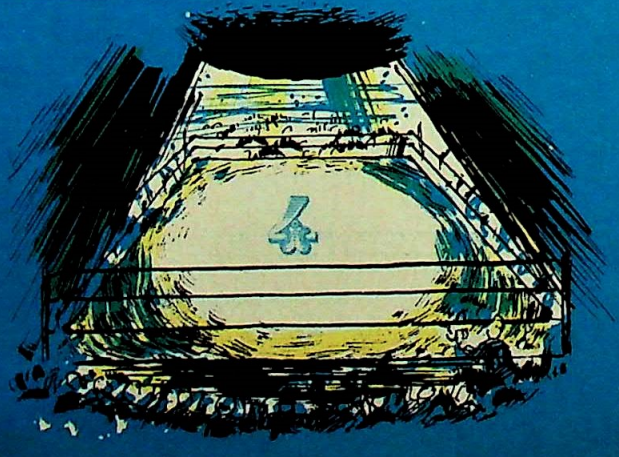
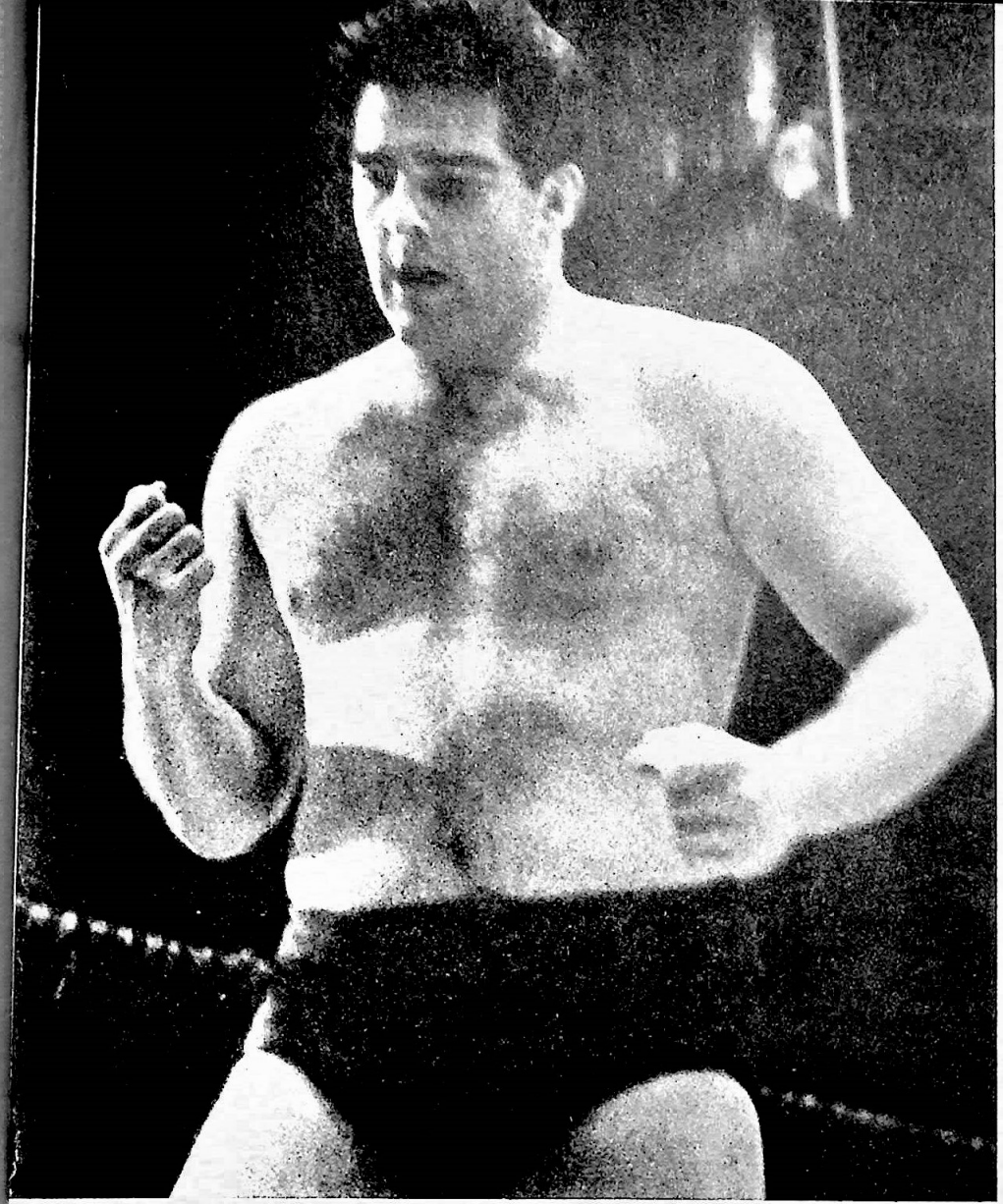


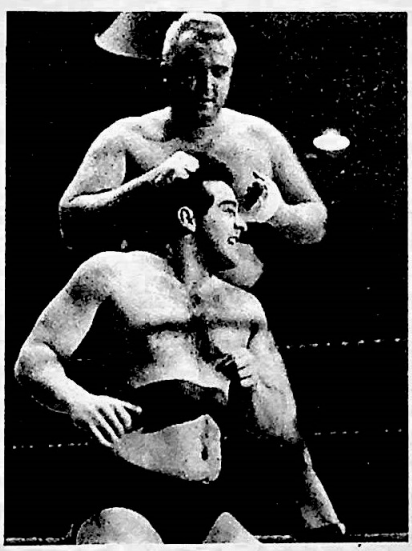


MARK LEWIN AND DON CURTIS, like Billy Budd in Herman Melville's classic novel, are the personification of all that is pure and good. They are the heroes, the bulwarks against evil who are supposedly ready and willing to lay down their lives in defense of what is right. Lewin, left, and Curtis are classic examples of what the perfect American boy is supposed to look and act like. In the ring they work together like the well-oiled machine; fast clever and exceptionally strong. They specialize in the dreaded but spectacular "sleeper" hold which renders a victim completely unconscious within a matter of seconds.



Mark has been offered many movie contracts, turned them all down, says he gets everything he wants from wrestling . . . money, fame and a "good life."

Only after being fouled repeatedly will Lewin resort to breaking rules.



Jerry Graham, the only wrestler Mark hates, rubs taped fist over his eyes.

WRESTLER WITH THE MOST SEX APPEAL

eyes up to his. "Please, Mark, get in—I must talk with you! I saw you wrestle, last night and—look! your check is bruised where that monster kicked you!' Her delicate hand came through the open window, as though to caress the injured check.

Mark backed away hastily but politely. "Er—what can I do for you, Ma'm?" The words came out before he could stop them.

The girl's eyes narrowed and a predatory look came over her face. She breathed a little heavier. "Don't make me tell you; get in—and I'll show you!"

As Mark recalled the incident, he tended to laugh it off. "But it wasn't so funny, then," he said. "I had to use all my will power to walk away."

Mark Lewis walks away from all of them. Well, *most* all of them; this 23-year-old superman from Buffalo, New York, is no robot. On the contrary, he's about as masculine as one can get—and it appears that countless thousands of females would like to get him! Actually, the above episode in the life of wrestling's most sexually appealing hero is a common occurrence except for one thing—the chauffeur. Most of the gals who try to pick up Lewin drive their own cars; or they offer to drive his. Most of them know Mark hates to drive.

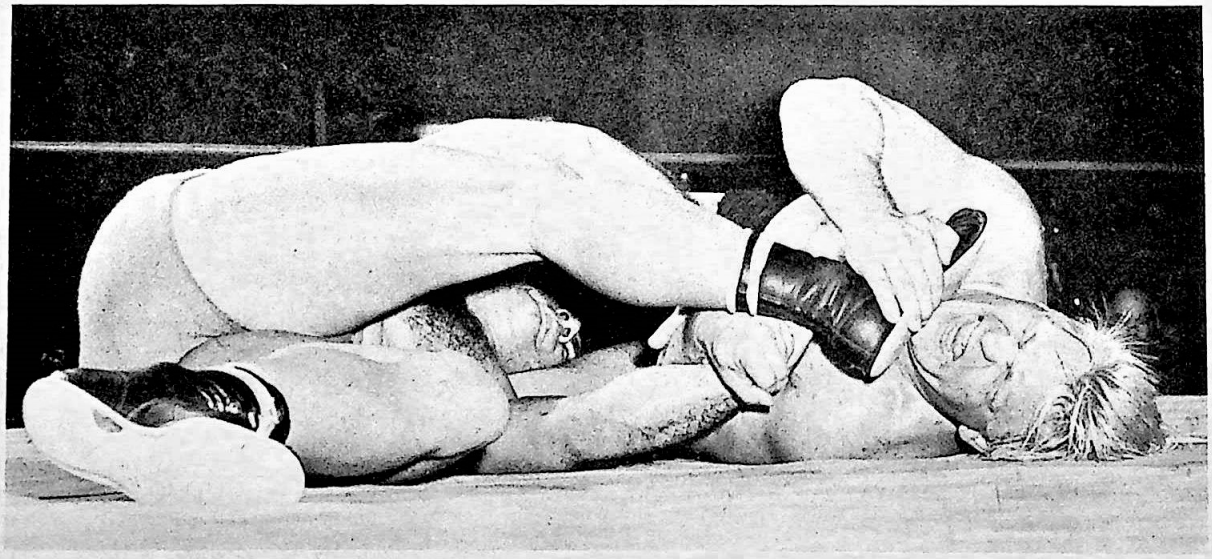
Even a fellow male can understand why this youngest of wrestling's three famous brothers (the other are Ted and Donn) has no trouble tossing ring opponents for a loop and, outside the ring, doing the same to the women of the nation. Figuratively speaking, that is. Of Herculean proportions, Mark's classical features are topped by wavy black hair that both the wrestlers and the girls love to get their hands on—but for different purposes.

On the other hand, no one seems to know just why it is that Mark is in a class by himself as a lady killer. I asked Don Curtis about it. Don is 50 percent of the tag team of Lewin and Curtis, at the moment the most popular combination in America. Since Don and Mark have known each other since boyhood, Curtis probably knows as much about his younger partner —Don is 33—as anyone. Besides, Don, the team's hard anchor man, would be expected to give a mature viewpoint to the matter.

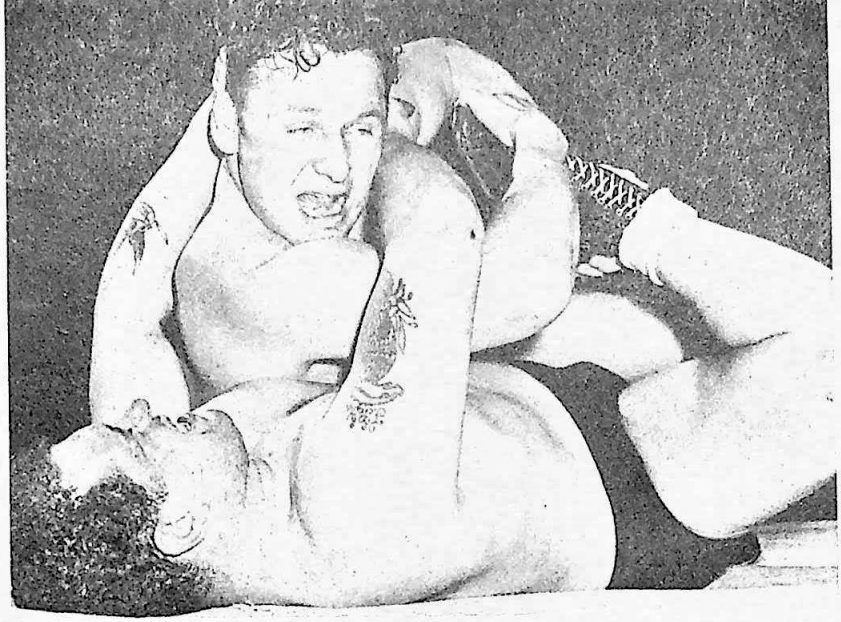
The senior member of the $50,000 a year enterprise is highly amused at his partner's troubles in the pre-marital ring, if you can call them troubles. "As a former wild oats sower myself," laughs Don, "I know what Mark is going through. Anyway, most wrestlers have trouble with crackpot women fans. So do movie stars and rock-'n-roll singers."

(*continued on page* 70)

Red Bastine's hand is held aloft by referee, but stunned expression on face shows no indication of victory.



Andre Drapp, the elastic Frenchman, shoves his foot under Ed Francis' chin and pushes with all his might.



George Strickland, top, and opponent Dimitri Contes look like pretzel.

SHOW STOPPERS!

In every wrestling bout worth its weight in admission fees, there are moments of pure shock. Or drama. Or comedy. Or tragedy.

Often, these "show stoppers" happen too quickly to be seen clearly; sometimes, due to the fan's attention being elsewhere momentarily, they are missed altogether. It is at such times that the camera proves its value. And sometimes, after the Big Moment has passed, those who see it wish they could see it again. It is Monsieur Daguerre's camera that makes this possible.

Here are typical moments of action and passion in the ring—"show stoppers" —that we can enjoy long after they happened.

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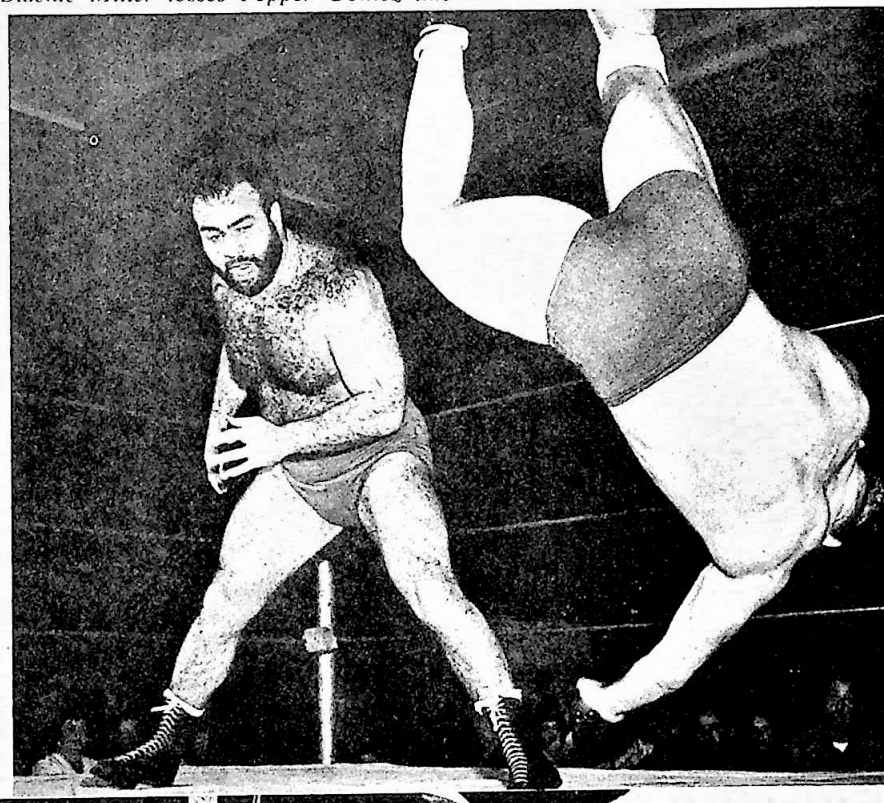
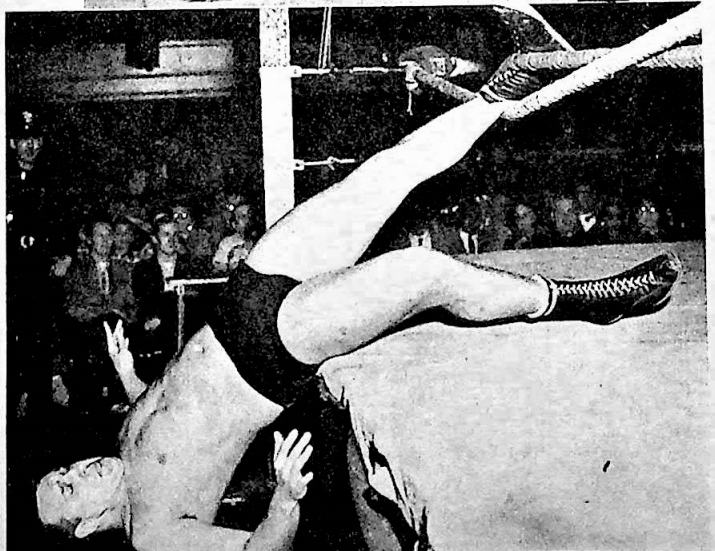
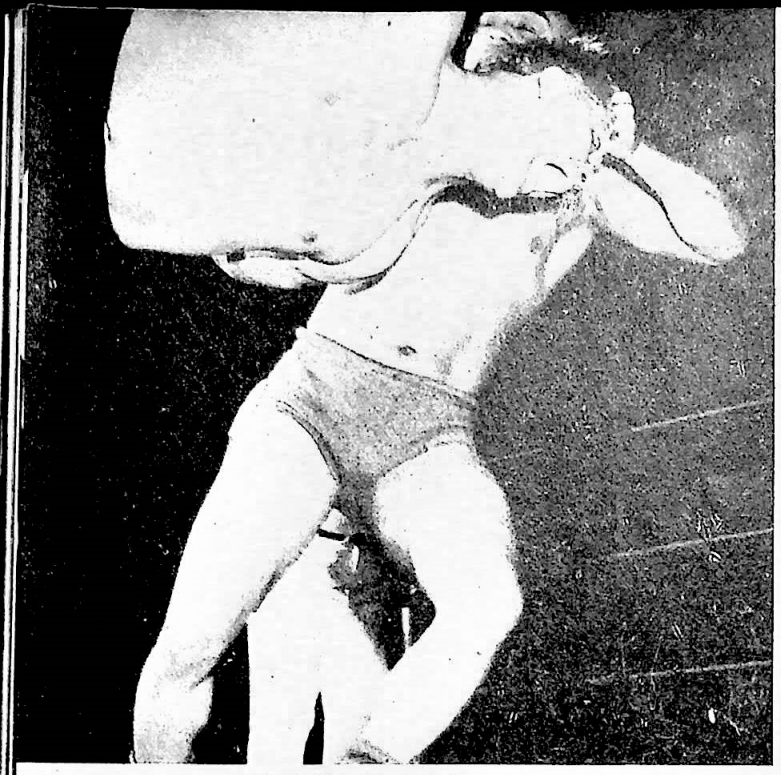
Blackie Miller tosses Pepper Gomez like a ball.



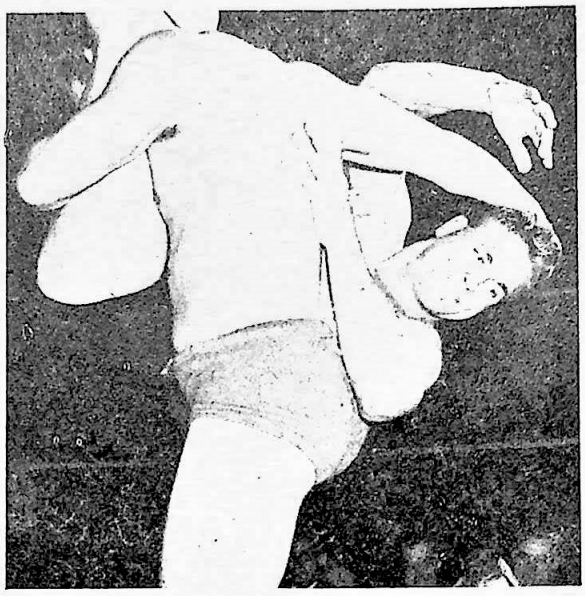


Bob Orton hung by foot.

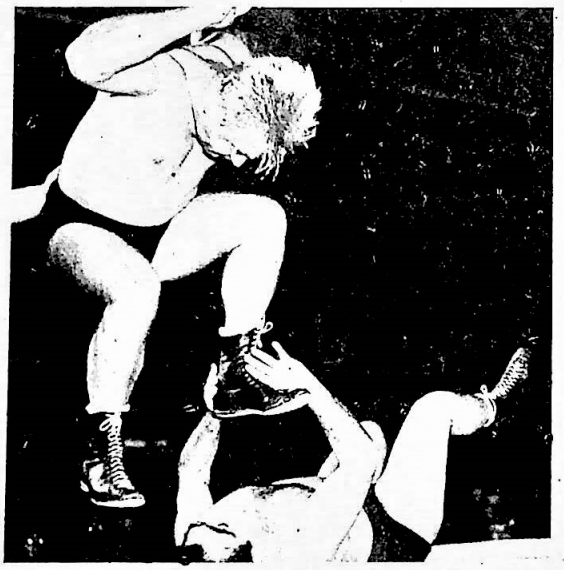
SHOW STOPPERS!



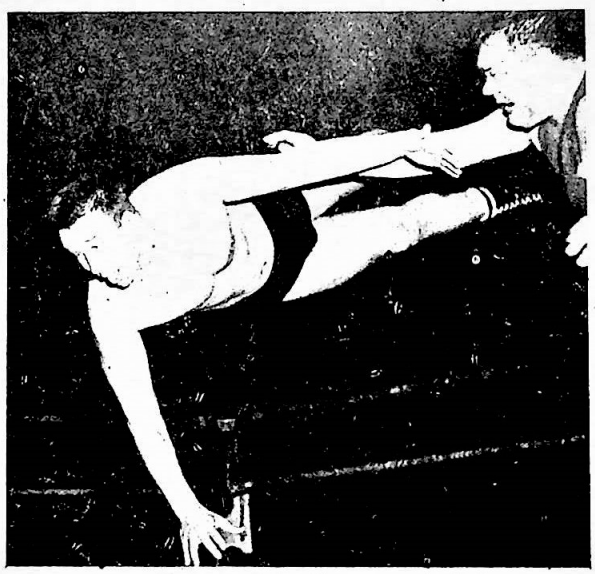
Black Hawk catapults Ed Francis to floor face first.



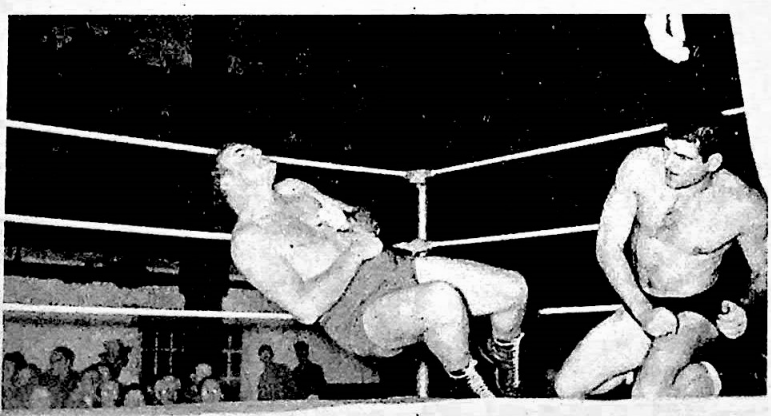
Gene Detton tries to figure out what to grab.



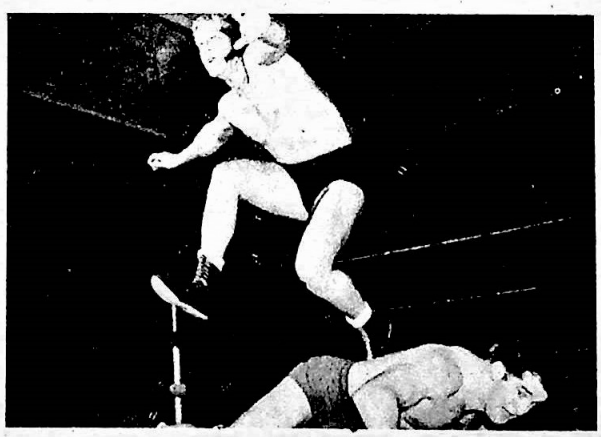
Again and again Ed Francis stamps on B. Montana.



Rocky Lee pitching—Bob Orton goes flying.

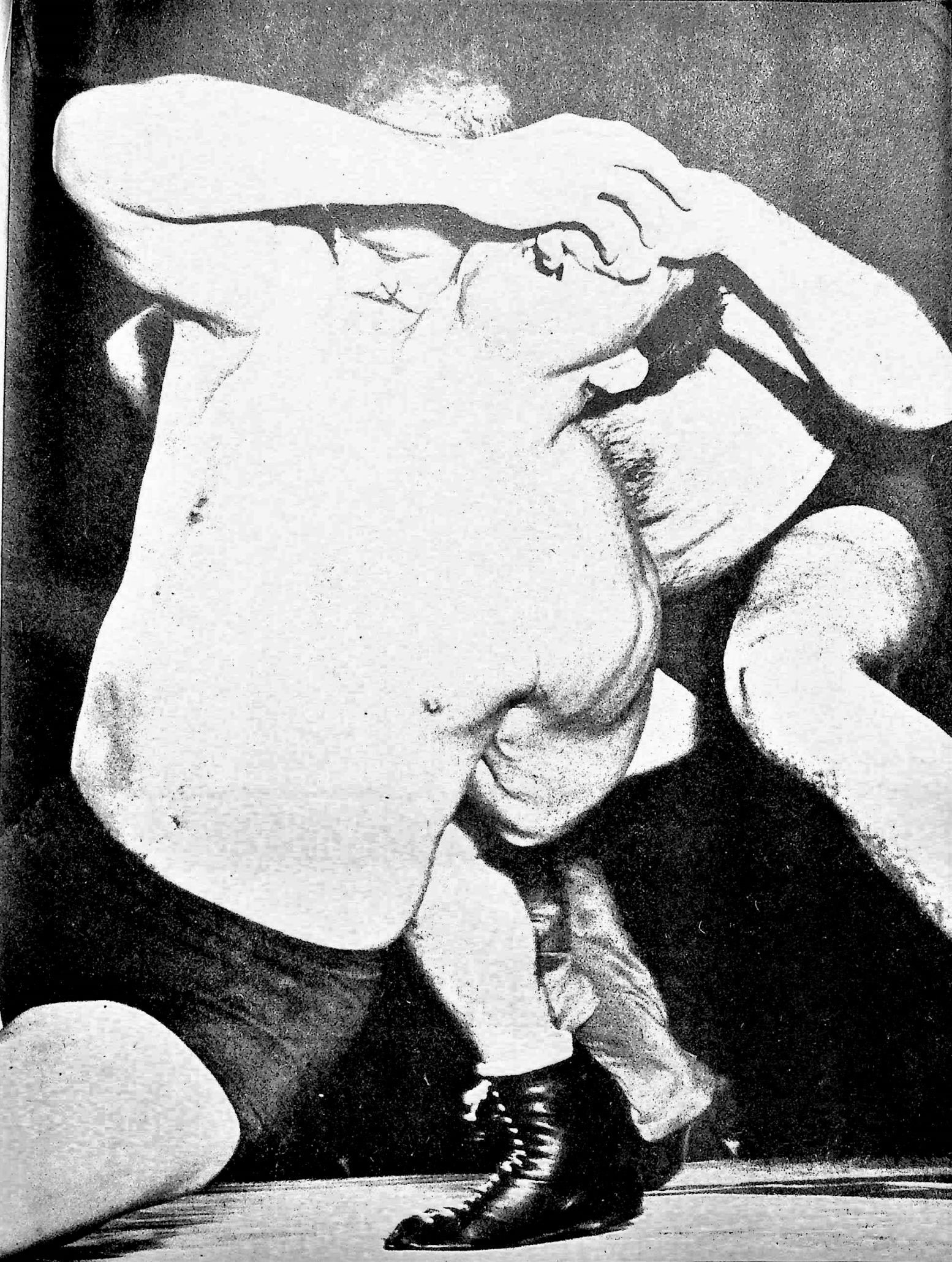


Dying swan Jack Carter and Gordon Hessel, right.

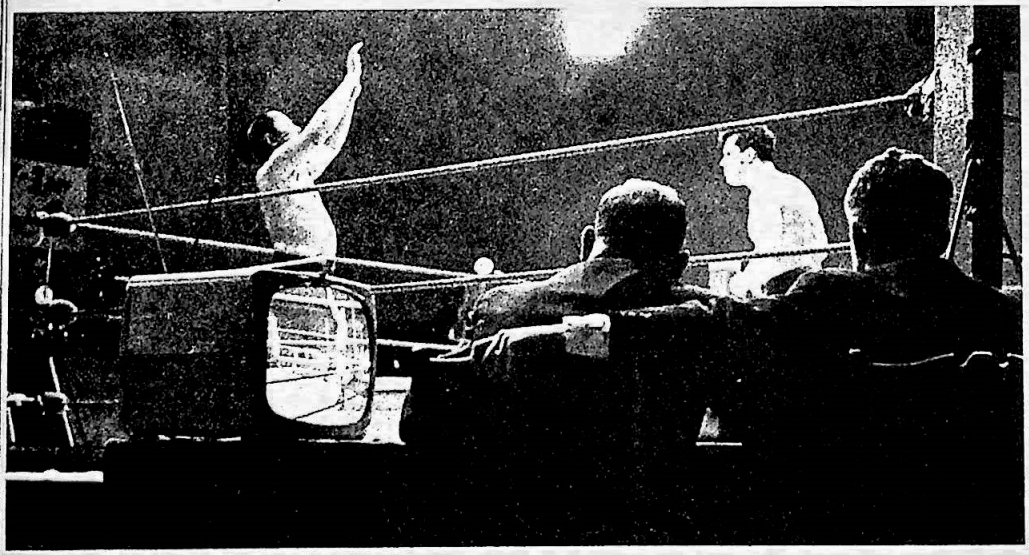


Hop scotch. Reg Parks down, Ed Francis up.

Lee Henning snaps at Von Poppenheim.

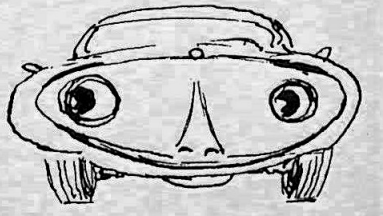


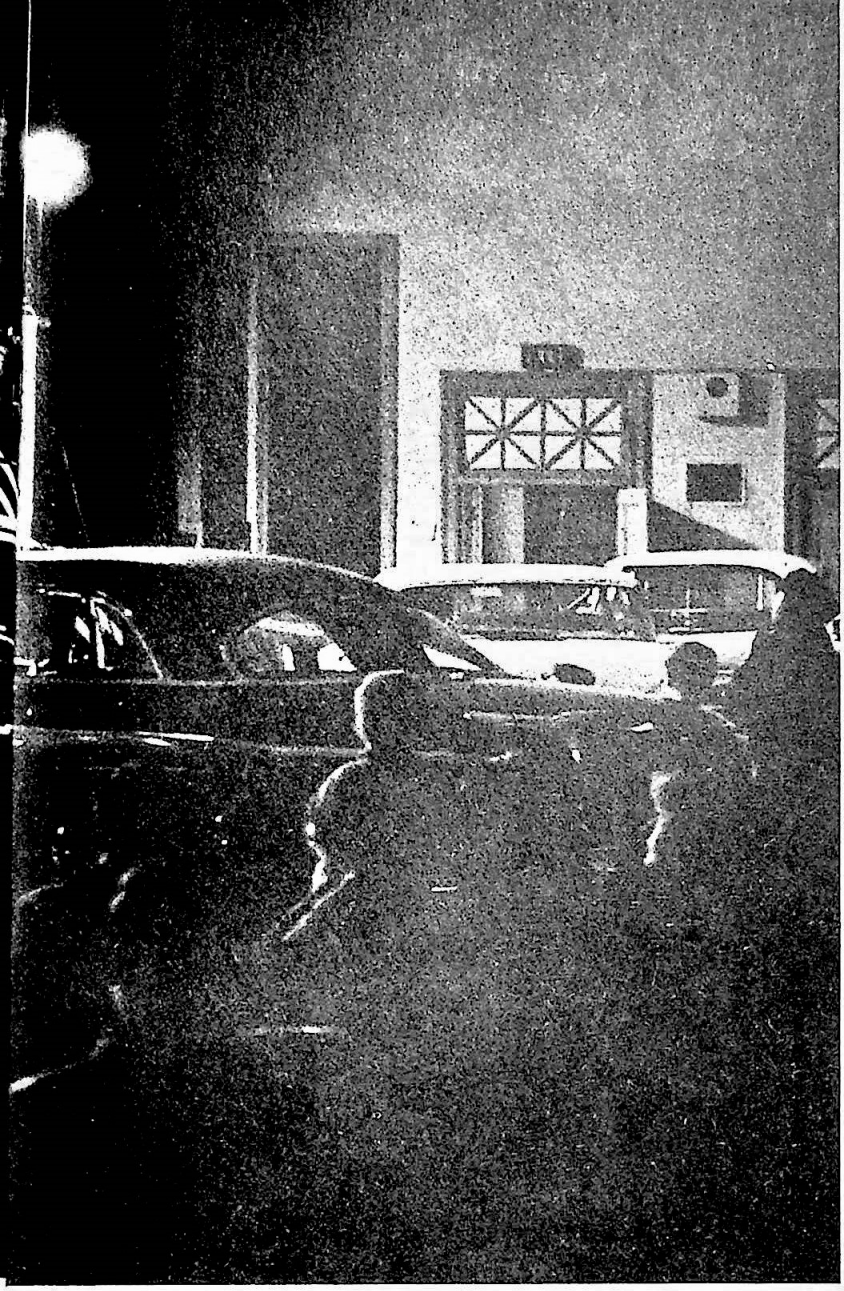
The people must look over, under or to one side of a car to see bouts. Nowhere else will you see a sight like this. Here driverless,



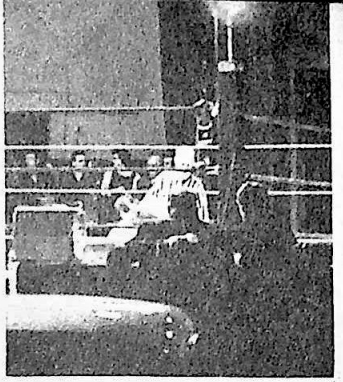
Announcer Lex Mayers, left, keeps up constant chatter into mike.

At wrestling shows in Columbus, Ohio, the paying customers are replaced at ringside by unoccupied automobiles.





sparkling-clean autos of all models occupy the choice vantage points.



WORLD'S WACKIEST MAT SHOW

ON weekdays, Columbus, Ohio's staid old Memorial Hall is a respectable auditorium devoted to various civic functions that maintain the dignity of the city and help to preserve the Republic.

But when Saturday comes, look out–! Dignity and decorum flee hand in hand from all exits and respectability takes refuge under the wide granite steps out front. For on that day the wrestlers take over! The joint jumps with joy –or agony–and to the sound of grunts and groans mixed with the roar of muffled auto engines, to the smell of sweat mixed with exhaust fumes–

–Lex Mayers enters.

A couple of thousand people cheer mightily–they should, since they got into the place for only half a buck–and Lex picks up the microphones. One makes noise in the hall, the

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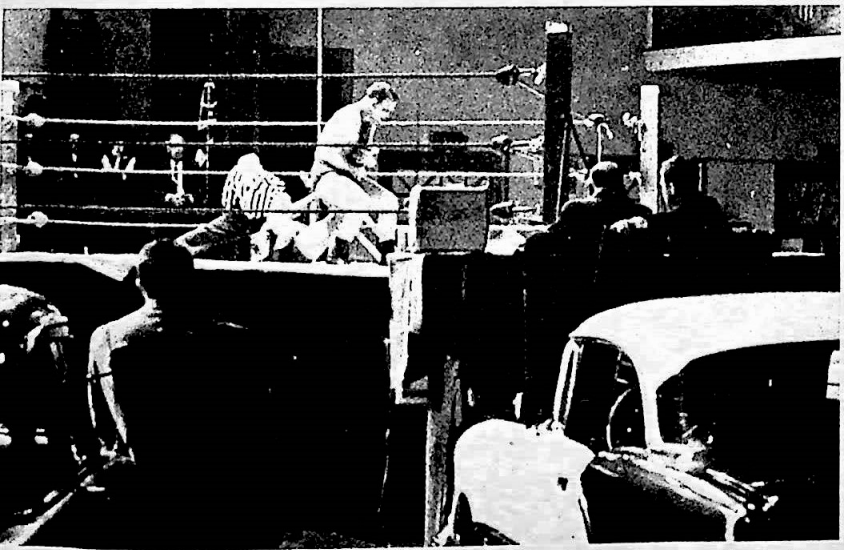
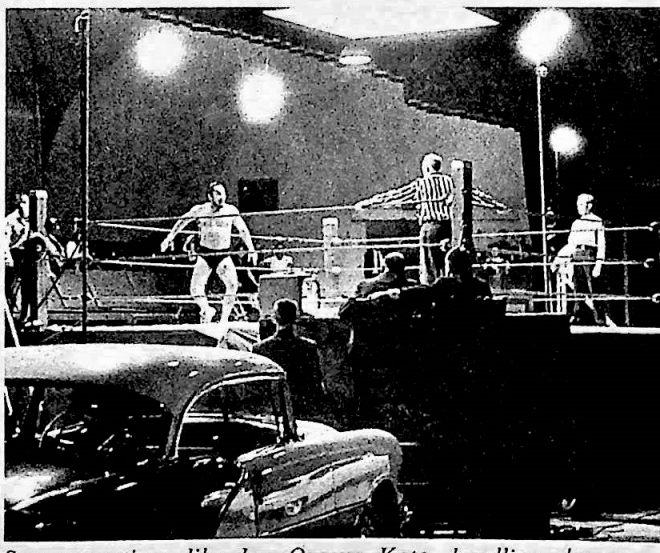


Ring is raised high off the floor making 7 ft. drop to the bottom.



Star attractions like Jap Omaya Kato, headline shows.

During intermission, Lex Mayers, left, plugs next week's show by interviewing Marvin Mercer, center, and Paul Bunyan.

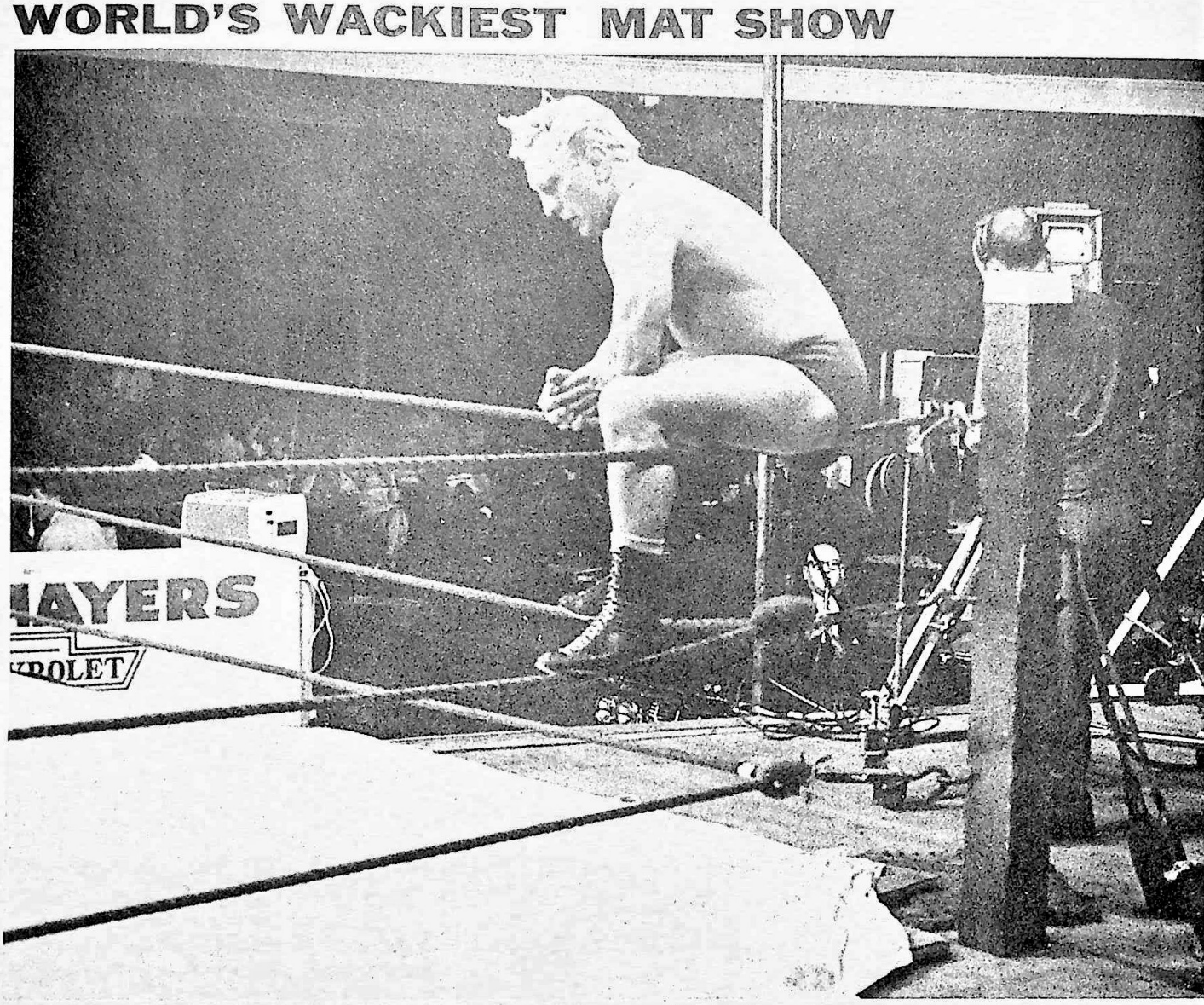
Bunyan, whose towering height makes him world's tallest wrestler, has interview with Mayers momentarily stopped as Promoter Al Haft warns of oncoming auto.

other is attached to a maze of Television engineering that beams the weekly show through the Midwest. If you think that this is an ordinary wrestling show, think again. Think of the ringside seats filled not with fans but with shiny automobiles! That's right, because bespectacled Lex Mayers is not just a TV announcer; he's also the owner of Columbus' biggest auto agency. He doubles as announcer because he's got more ham in him than Swift and also because he is Ohio's No. 1 wrestling fan.

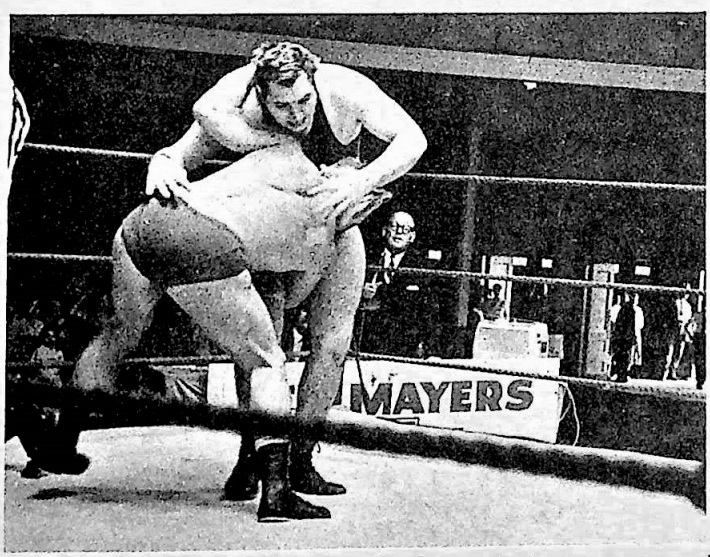
How can you reconcile wrestling with car hustling? Easy. Between falls, matches and in fact, at any time he gets the idea, Mayers pitches his vast line of autos. To insure that there is a con-

(*continued on page* 70)

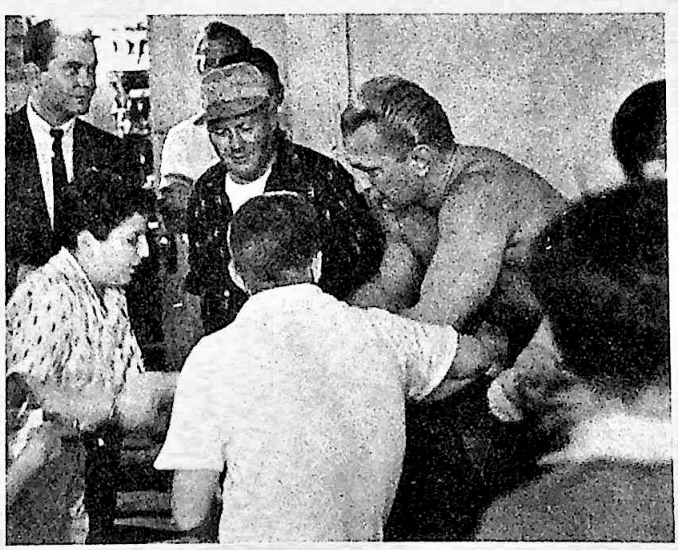
WORLD'S WACKIEST MAT SHOW



Nature Boy Buddy Rogers rests between falls as Mayers (under Buddy) peddles his array of autos.



Mayers gets so excited that often he forgets he is announcer and yells away like ordinary fan. Here Rogers lifts Little Boy Blue.



Buddy Rogers is the hottest attraction in Ohio area. Here he is surrounded by admirers as he waits to enter ring for main bout.

Curry is thrown from ring, lands amid mass of broken chairs and jeers of crowd.

the FACE

When attacked by angry crowd, Bull tried to defend self. Police saved him.

Curry brags that he has splintered more chairs over heads than any wrestler.

So fierce is Bull Curry's face that he can panic a crowd by just looking natural.

Twenty-five years ago, in Hartford, Connecticut, an excited 10-year old girl sat beside her father in the local wrestling arena. The little girl enjoyed what she saw until one of the wrestlers hurled his opponent out of the ring, then followed his victim over the ropes, slipped on the floor, and landed within inches of the little girl. To her imaginative young mind, it seemed that the huge giant had leaped right at her. She screamed hysterically, uncontrollably, until her distraught father carried her from the arena.

The next day she cuddled up to her dad. "His face," she shuddered as she spoke. "His face scared me! I . . . I thought he was going to hurt me!"

A few months ago, the same girl, now a grown woman of thirty-four, took her own 12-year-old girl scout to the wrestling matches in Hartford. She nearly fainted when, slipping into the ring to the catcalls and jeers of the crowd, she saw the very same "face" that had frightened her out of her wits so long ago. It must

be the man's son, she thought. But no—not even a son could duplicate so frightful a face—the beetling brows which jutted out like an untrimmed hedge, the maleavolent bulging eyes that held only hatred for the world in general and opposing wrestlers in particular, the 200-pound body covered with ugly black hair that was obscene in appearance.

But no—! Beside her, her own daughter was screaming along with the rest of the throng, "Yah, Curry, y'bum—you're in for it tonight! When Johnny Valentine gets through with you, they'll just pull the canvas up over you and bury you in it!"

At least, that's what the mother thought she heard! But, confused, she wasn't sure.

It was true, though. For the last twenty years, one of the most hateful men in big-time wrestling has been ripping opponents apart, chasing rash fans out into the street, resisting arrest, and splintering chairs over the heads of just about everybody within range. *And* scaring children, women, referees, cops, U. S. Marines and pregnant cows just by looking at them. For Fred "Bull" Curry does not have the face that launched a thousand ships—he has the face that wrecked them. It has been said that, back in the forties, a representative of the Ingersoll Watch Company secretly offered Curry a large sum if he would take a stroll through the Bulova factory, but the story is probably untrue. Most of the things they say about Curry are true, however. He is one wrestler who doesn't have to pay a press agent to think up wild stories and tricky gags. The Bull just goes on being himself—his own mean, miserable, unmanageable, unpredictable self—and headlines pop up like field mice in his wake.

There was the night in Bridgeport, Connecticut a few months ago when Curry sat in a corner of the dressing, alone, as usual. He was naked except for a soiled towel drapped over his lap. Promoter Vince McMahon, a worried look on his face, walked in the room followed by a police lieutenant. They went over to Curry.

"They just served me with a court order forbidding you to wrestle," the promoter said.

"Why?" Bull asked in amazement.

The policeman answered his question. "We got a complaint from a lady who saw you wrestle here last week. She claims that you upset her so much that she had a miscarriage."

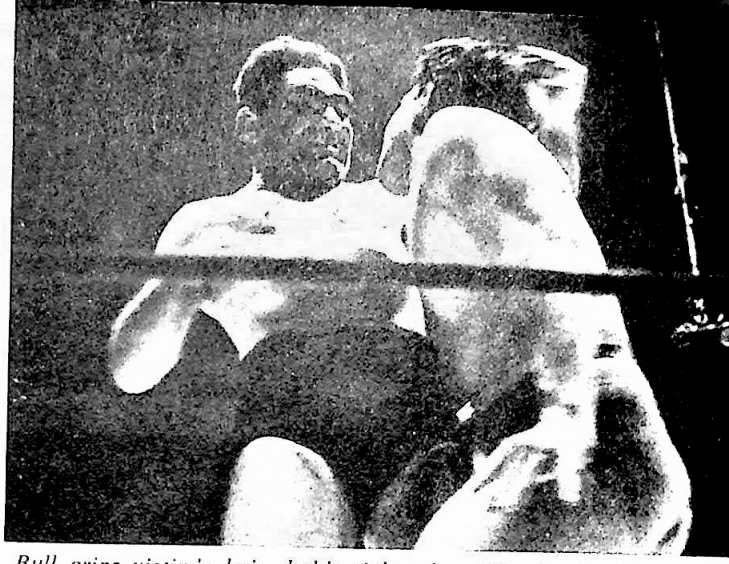
Curry shook his ferocious head. "Sonofabitch!" he growled. "Now I heard everything!"

But Bull didn't wrestle that night. Nor did he wrestle the following week or the week after that.

Curry has been adding to his own legend since his very first match in Detroit in 1940. That was the night three persons were hospitalized and half the police force took 45 minutes to quell the uprising caused by the Wild Bull's murderous tactics.

One of the few villains who wins most of his matches, Wild Bull Curry's face is his fortune and the *mis*fortune of almost anyone who is suicidal enough to tangle with him—either in or out of the ring.

On these pages we present a unique portfolio of the face you'd love to touch—with a blowtorch! THE END



Bull grips victim's hair, holds tight, slugs him in the face.

Bull avoids punishment as furious opponent launches attack.

During argument in dressing room, Bull slugged Joe Baronowski.

Maybe you can't see him, but every wrestler can. He's on top of every hold. He's there every-time a man crashes against a ring post or goes flying out of the ring. He's in the dressing room after each bout, waiting for the final body slam, the headlock that was held just a little too long, the sleeper hold from which the victim doesn't awake . . . He's

DEATH!

Wrestling has been accused of being a faked exhibition and not sport.

Mike Romano was in the prime of life. He had a lot to live for—home, family, respect and a world of ability in a high-paying profession. He also had a fine physique and perfect health. Mike Romano was a wrestler.

One day back in the late forties, at the beginning of the "new" wrestling era, Mike was interviewed by a newsman. He was asked the routine questions, including the inevitable: Is wrestling on the level?" Mike's answer was not routine.

"Sure," he said, "we build up to certain planned climaxes that will guarantee exciting finishes. And sometimes we even know who's going to win. But don't

(*continued on page 70*)

Andre Bollet

Karol Kalmikoff

Tosh Togo

But the wrestlers know different. They are never sure when a miscalculated move will mean permanent injury or even death.

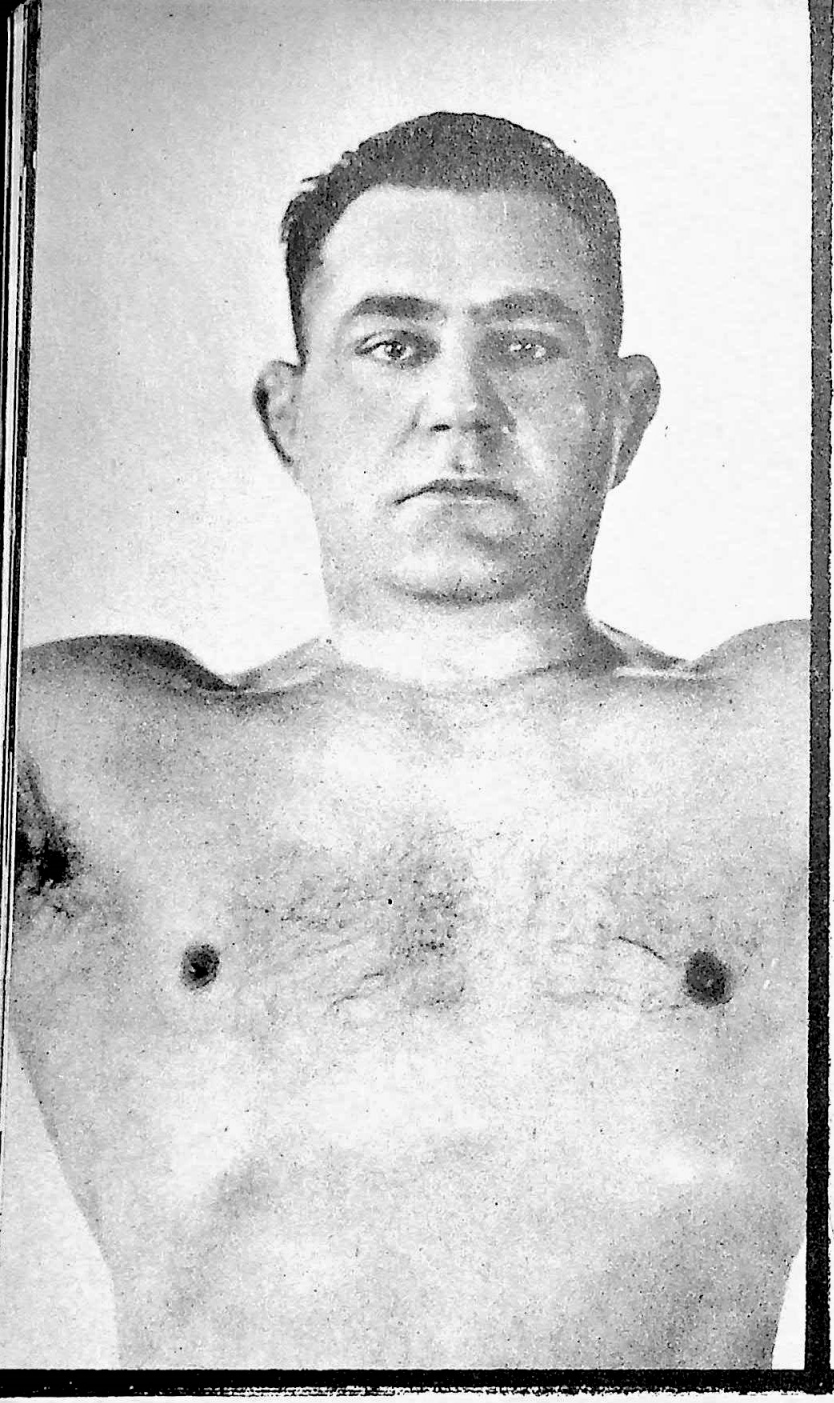
Great Togo

Larry Moquin

Buddy Rogers

Ike Eakins

By MARK RESSLER

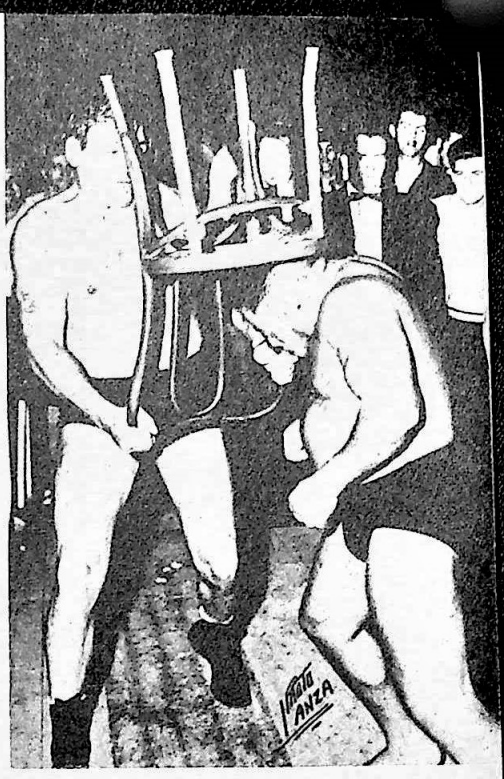


MIKE ROMANO—Killed in the ring.

DENNIS CLARY—Died of head injuries.

Billy Darnell *Frank Valois* *Edouard Carpentier* *Bill Miller*

GORDON McKINLEY—Killed in the ring.

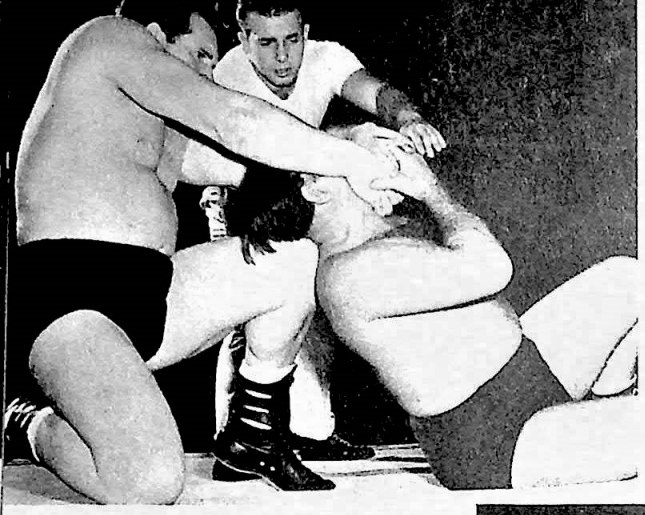


Enraged Yvon Robert shatters chair over Great Togo's head in Montreal bout. Brain concussion kept Togo out of action more than six months.

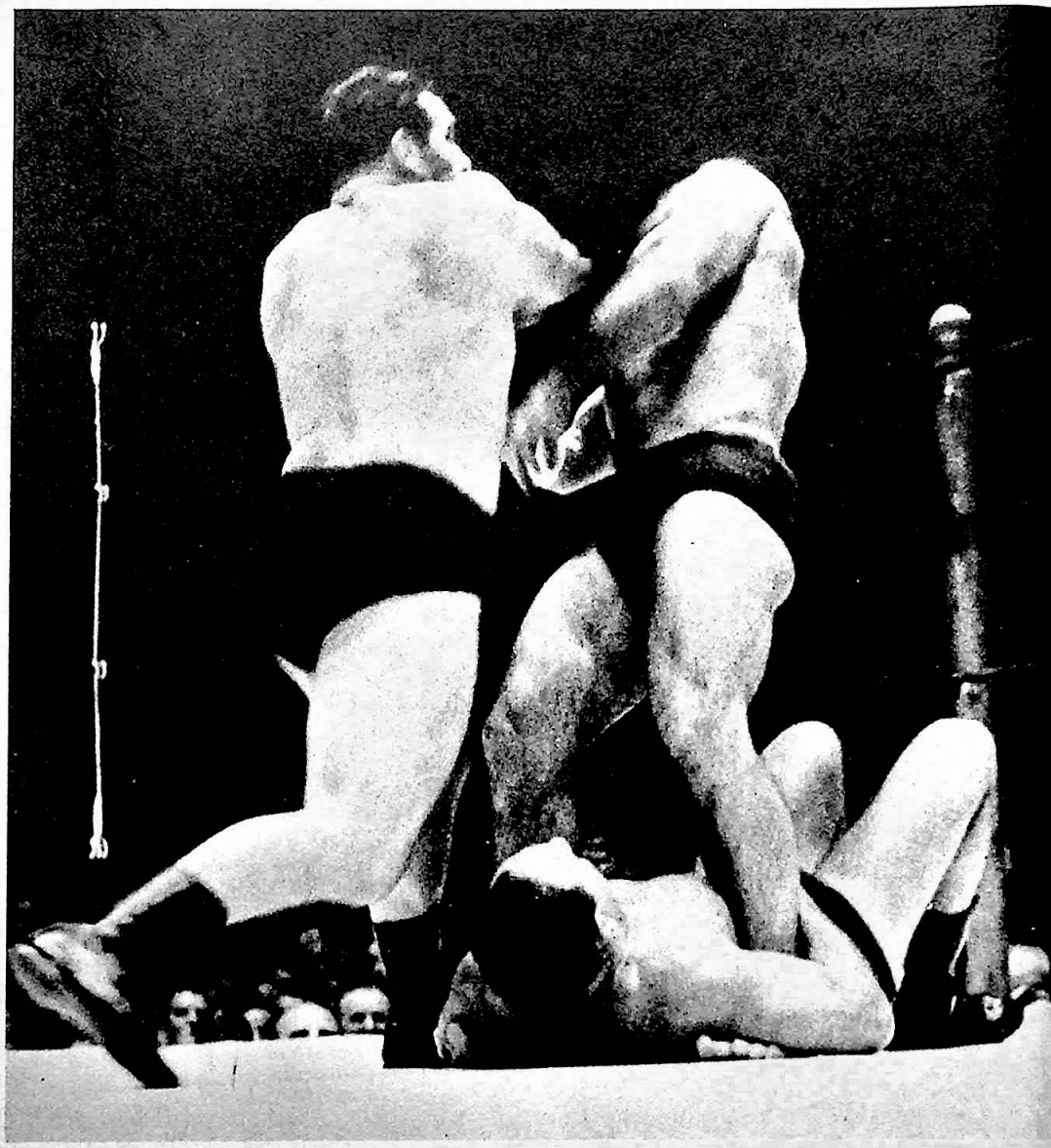
Gypsy Joe rammed into ring post when he missed flying tackle, split head wide open. Wound took 24 stitches.

Nanjo Singjh fell from ring, cracked his head against concrete floor. Suffered deep gash and fractured skull.

Tough guy Danny McShane so aroused a Texas crowd that he was attacked as he left ring. He suffered severe cuts and body bruises.



From Sydney to Savannah they have left a trail of broken bones and bloody canvas.



Costello catapults Antonino Rocca straight into waiting fist of partner Heffernan in N. Y.

Heffernan calls this "the most effective weapon in wrestling." Opponent is Bull Montana.

THOSE BEASTS—THE KANGAROOS

By SANDY OSCHAY

IN poker, a pair of deuces will sometimes win. In wrestling, a certain pair of deuces almost always wins. And these particular deuces are wild, the wildest twosome since Gargantua and King Kong, a couple of other gorillas that were always scaring people out of their wits. Any wrestling fan knows that this description fits only the Fabulous Kangaroos, because no other tag team works as they do.

The Kangaroos, who answer to the names Al Costello and Roy Heffernan, are completely indescribable. So are their ring tactics. After covering a Kangaroo match in Singapore, an excited Oriental sports reporter wrote:

"Last night at the Happy World Stadium, there was big explosion like at Hiroshima. When cloud clear, people in audience were very angry and noisy and rush

Al Costello slams away at Skull Murphy. Al is rough and ready type who sets fast pace.

THOSE BEASTS — THE KANGAROOS

into ring to kill Australian wrestlers called Fabulous Kangaroos, who almost start international accident with dirty fighting ways not seen since Pearl Harbor. But Kangaroos escape through window in toilet on bus or they be hung by angry people."

That example of reporting is about par for the curse—and the curses are many when the Kangaroos wrestle anywhere in the world.

"I can't understand why people hate us so much," said Al Costello, senior member of the deadly duet, who moved from Italy to Australia at seven and changed his name from Giacomo Costa to the more euphonious handle. Heffernan, 33, younger but bigger, shrugged his enormous shoulders and said, "Can't figure it out—we're really a couple of nice guys!"

This is, unbelievably, true. The Kangaroos are two of the most regular fellows you'd want to meet—outside the ring. And when Costello, in a tuxedo, visits your living room and offers up an aria from Rigoletto or Carmen, you wonder how such heavenly—and professional—sounds could emanate from the same throat that growls those harsh grunts and animal-like screams at wrestling opponents. Al started out to be a concert singer and still makes like one at the drop of a piano stool. As for

The Kangaroos have added veteran Red

Roy, although of a less cultured bent than Al, he's soft-spoken and gentle when not ripping the cartilage and tendons of ring victims.

But don't let them kid you about the secret of their incredible success. They know why everybody hates them. They planned it that way. Just as a successful field general plans a decisive battle in war, so the Kangaroos planned their campaign in the "Battle of the Box-office." As Al Costello says with a straight face, "The fans hate us so much they sometimes follow us all the way to the bank, cursing and insulting us as we make out the deposit slips. Happens every day."

But things weren't always that good. There was the time when Roy Heffernan, with a million dollars worth of Australia's best muscles, couldn't even get a grubstake. Professional strong men never were in demand. Not even when one had the fantastic start enjoyed by Heffernan. Born in New South Wales, he startled the entire sub-continent, when he was only nine, by lifting 100 pounds over his head. At fourteen he became the undisputed teenage champion weightlifter by hoisting 395 pounds! Four years later he was Australian amateur lifting and wrestling champion with more pretty trophies and medals than his room could hold.

"But," he says, "I couldn't eat a damned one of them. So I turned pro." He grins at the recollection. "Not that I ate much better then. Not until I became an international figure did I realize there was more to life than mutton chops and cheap hotels."

How had he become an international figure?

"Well, I did a pretty good job of wrestling in Australia and I think it's a great place to be born in and go back to. But—let's face it—it's not exactly the best place in the world to make your fortune. So, when I got an offer to tour the Eastern Hemisphere as a wrestler, I took it. Believe it or not, I wrestled the Champion of India before an audience of 100,000 people! Beat him, too. Had a financial interest in the film, as well—which was shown all over India for three months. I wrestled with similar success in Malay, Ceylon, Pakistan, Iraq, South Africa, Cyprus, Egypt and Rhodesia. When I went north they loved me, for some reason. I was undefeated in Ireland, Switzerland, England, France, Belgium—hell, name a place, any place! I've wrestled there."

You can see that Heffernan is strictly a sportsman, a man of intelligence who has the good sense to capitalize on his amazing physical gifts. This, coupled with his easy manner and cosmopolitan air, makes him a man among men—and, we assume, women.

It was largely Costello though who is responsible for the creation of the famous Kangaroo wrestling team. Since all Italian parents want their offspring to become opera stars, it's natural that young Giacomo's folks were shocked, shaken and shived when the husky youngster said, one day, "It's great to sing for your supper, but I'll be a lot surer of breakfast and lunch if I wrestle for a living."

In a less spectacular way, Al's career paralleled that of Heffernan—but about fifteen years earlier. He shone as a school athlete, won the amateur heavyweight boxing championship of Victoria, and did well as a weightlifter and wrestler, amateur style. Like Roy, he found he often finished his competitions with a full heart and an empty stomach. In the late thirties, the big Italian turned Aussie used his muscles to bounce undesirables out of night clubs, wrestled in carnivals and, in general, began to wish he had decided to sing for his supper, as his mother wished he had.

After a two-year hitch in the Australian army during the war, Al turned to a full-time professional wrestling career under proper guidance, the thing that had been lacking before the war. "I got a good start from old Len Hall, one of the best promotors in the world," Al admits thankfully. "He saw that I would be a better tough guy than a hero, in spite of my classical good looks—"

In narrating it, Al pauses here and winks waggishly at you. Al is not likely to be the handsomest man in any ring unless his opponent happens to be a bull crocodile. The knowledge does not dismay him—he knows it's money in the bank. He goes on, "I wrestled around the world for Len Hall, and did pretty well. In fact I did as well as any singer. People love showmanship and I learned about showmanship when I saw how they went wild over my little songs before a match. It helped pave the way for what came later."

What came later has proved to be the kind of success story that sounds like fiction. "Roy and I were a natural as a tag team," Al recounts the story. "And since there aren't many Aussies around international wrestling circles, it was inevitable that we should hear about each other eventually. The minute I saw Roy in action I knew what was going to happen. We decided to work together—but the question was—what should we do to be different? That is, what would make us stand out from any other tag team in the world?

"Maybe it seems obvious, but it wasn't at the time. I think I got the idea when I saw Chief Don Eagle in his head dress. Instead of thinking up complicated ideas, why not be completely natural? So Roy and I tried it. We went into the ring wearing Anzac hats and military jackets—the War made them familiar as being strictly Australian—and we carried real boomerangs. Nothing is as Australian as a boomerang—and the title, Kangaroos, was certainly inevitable. Everything we do, we do with one idea in mind—make people hate us like poison." Costello grinned. "That, you know, is what guarantees those regular trips to the bank."

Roy Heffernan is the quiet one of the pair. He can afford to be, with a spokesman like Costello around. But when Roy says something, it's the kind of thing you listen to. "We've found that people boo us and hate us and throw things at us for one reason—they *like* us! That's right. They like to see us; we're the guys they *love* to *hate*. They like nothing better than to see Rocia and Perez tear us apart; *but*, first they like to see us tear Rocca and Perez apart. Why? So they can enjoy themselves while hating us; then, when the heroes get even with us, it makes the evening complete, like winning an argument with your husband—or wife!"

Costello looked at his younger partner in mock amazement and stroked his forehead gently. "He has an eighteen-inch arm—but he has a nineteen-inch brain. You'd never guess it though except when he talks. Talk some more, Roy boy, go ahead."

Roy talked some more. "I guess we're pretty good in the ring. We must be because, sometimes, I get worried about how bad people hate us. They get real fierce, no kidding. It makes me wonder if we're actually the no-good swine they insist we are. But then, before or after a match—or maybe on a Sunday night—we'll get together with a writer or somebody, and talk the way we are talking now." He paused, then continued. "They ask, how do you feel when you're kicking a man's brains in? I stop and think a moment. Then I answer truthfully, as I always do. I feel pretty good about it. I like the sensation of supreme power it gives. I like it fine. That makes me wonder even more. Maybe Al and I are just exactly what the fans think we are; a couple of genuine Heels!"

Berry, center, to their routines with success.

WRESTLER WITH THE MOST SEX APPEAL

(*continued from page* 51)

I shook my head. "This is different! Mark must have something special. On the way to the arena tonight I parked the car and walked a block to the Garden with Mark. Outside the door there were a couple of dozen wild-eyed women. As soon as they spotted Mark they surrounded him, yelling, squealing, waving autograph books and grabbing at his clothes. Two cops finally had to clear a path so he could get through. I know that doesn't happen to other wrestlers because I've watched some of them walk through a girl's high school gym class without getting a second glance. So—what's with Mark?"

Don Curtis didn't know. So I tried a couple of guys who should know Mark Lewin even better than his partner does. His brothers, Ted and Donn.

"What," I asked Ted and Donn, "makes your little brother so extraordinary?"

"Little?" Ted stared at me. "He's the biggest of us. Furthermore, in my opinion, both Donn and I are handsomer than he is."

Donn saw that I was serious, that this wasn't just a gag interview. "Matter of fact, Mark has always had a strong attraction for gal types," he admitted, smiling. "I remember one time back in Buffalo—he'd just finished high school, Mark had gone on a double date with Ted. Well, about ten o'clock Ted came home in disgust, alone. Believe it or not, *both* gals had fallen for Mark! Ted, feeling like a third wheel, pulled out."

"That's right," conceded Ted. "I remember that both gals kept calling Mark 'Baby Doll' and 'Peaches' all night. In fact, they still do! Since we all took to the road, I haven't seen much of Mark, except when we're on the same wrestling card, so I can't tell you much about his current after-hours activities."

I told them I thought they were jealous, at which the brothers protested vigorously. "Hell, no!" roared Donn, "—I wouldn't be in Mark's shoes for anything. Why, he can't call his life his own. It's a constant struggle to steal a few hours of privacy. Some people are hounded by bill collectors, some by the police, and others by yes men. But not Mark—he's hounded, if I can use the term, by women!"

Donn shuddered. "As you know, Mark lives in an apartment in Brooklyn. Well, a few months ago he still had his phone listed in the directory. One day I was visiting him—on a Sunday, it was—and the minute I walked in the phone rang. Mark answered it, said he was sorry, then hung up. 'Another girl,' he said to me. 'It's been this way since I got back from the Midwestern tour. They're driving me nuts!"

"No sooner had he spoken than the phone rang again. Another gal. This one had been waiting for him to get back for three weeks—called every day. Now would he please keep her from jumping off the Brooklyn Bridge by taking her out on a date?

"'Why," asked Mark, "don't you go bother Killer Kowalski?—or better still, *jump!*' He hung up.

"The phone rang again. With an unprintable expression, Mark grabbed the phone and ripped it off the kitchen wall. He breathed a sigh of relief and said, 'Now—let's have dinner!'

"Believe it or not, when we went out that evening, two teen-age girls were waiting in the street outside his apartment. He had to hail a cab to get rid of them!" Donn shook his head. "Come to think of it—he *must* have something special. But I'm damned if I know what it is."

By this time I was beginning to feel like a detective solving a tough mystery. Or, *not* solving it. Desperate, I put in a call to Mark Lewin the next day. "How about a double date, Mark? You and me and two distaff riffraff. Er—you bring your current girl friend, okay?" We arranged it for that night after my telling him it was strictly a social thing.

I went out and talked to Genevieve, the outer office stenographer. I thought she was going to faint. "Wonderful!" she yelped. "—But who are *you* going to take?" *"You,* darling—this is business." When I left her, she was staring at an empty typewriter. Her eyes were all glassy and unfocused.

It was a successful date. Mark's girl for the occasion was a neat slip of a redhead named Cora. It took quite a while to find out what the front of her face looked like, since she kept looking at Mark, alongside her, for the first hour or two. I didn't get much out of Genevieve either; just the profile. She kept staring at Mark also. I got the impression that he would have been happier if his two brothers had been there instead of the two girls.

I tried to inject a serious note into the proceedings. "Now, in my opinion, here is why you gals—and ten thousand others throughout the nation—are hog wild about this hunk of Buffalo beef. My conclusions are based on many hours of research, observation and interviews."

Mark kept on eating and the girls kept on ogling Mark. I continued, "In the first place, he has an innocent baby face with complexion to match; his flesh is unmarred by tattoos, hair or ropey muscles. This right away brings out the mother instinct in women. In the second place, the guy is big, powerful and masterful; he slams villains to the canvas when they misbehave and slugs them with chairs and referees when necessary—while at the same time being strictly fair if he can. This attracts the kind of women who have a father fixation —they'd like Mark to look after them."

I paused. Mark was looking mildly interested in what I was saying; the girls were looking interested too—in Mark. Feeling proud of my own insight, I finished the lecture: "Third, Mark is the ideal hero type—a Viking, a Knight-at-the-Round-Table, a Prince Charming—an all-out *man!* Which, of course, brings out the strongest driving force in all women—the predatory urge. This, "I concluded," is exactly how you two are staring at the guy right now! So—how about telling me in your *own* words: What is it about Mark Lewin that attracts you?" I held my pencil in readiness.

Cora touched Mark's cheek lightly. "He is," she cooed, "the *most!"*

Genevieve sighed. "He's just far out—but *too much,* get it?"

I got it. I got up and left them there—the three of them—and rushed home to my typewriter.

WORLD'S WACKIEST MAT SHOW

(*continued from page* 58)

stant turnover of vehicles, wide doors open at intervals in the walls and a shaft of light is followed by a sputtering, roaring auto that replaces the one driven outside.

This phantasmagoria of a promotion is mad, manic, amazing—and profitable as all hell! Lex sells lots of cars durng every show, and the action on TV is a booming success. Started about a year ago, the affair is the joint effort of Mayers, who picks up the tab for the whole affair, and veteran promotor Al Haft.

There has thus far been no trouble between cars and wrestlers. However, there have been a few close calls. Such as when a wrestler leaves or enters the ring at the same time a car is moved into the ringside pit. Once this happened just as 301-pound Don Leo Jonathan leaped off the high apron and landed on the floor. A brand new station wagon, on its way in, jolted to a shuddering stop, narrowly missing Jonathan's fleeing rump. Lex held up his hands in horror, and screamed, "Look out—you nearly hit him! Migawd, that car isn't insured!"

That just gives you an idea . . . If you insist on coming to Columbia to see the show in person, make sure you bring fifty cent and your driver's license. ● *end*

DEATH! THE FOURTH MAN IN THE RING

(*continued from page* 62)

get the idea we have all the answers, or even a small part of them. It's a tough business and the one thing you can't ever fix is death!"

Of course, that is not the way most wrestlers talk to outsiders. What made Mike Romano talk that way? Some who knew him say he was a very sensitive man whose thinking went much deeper than most people's. Others insist that he had a *feeling.* Call it a premonition, a prophecy

(*continued on page* 75)

THE UNBEATABLE TEAM OF VARGA & VARGA

(*continued from page* 47)

so well. We saw Billy get slammed into a ring post. His head was split open and they carried him away on a stretcher. So I turned off the TV set and went into the kitchen to make coffee. My girl friend thought I was an iceberg with no feeling. She said she'd be dying if that had happened to *her* husband. I told her I *was* dying—and that I had died a hundred times since meeting Billy. *But,* if I were to let it get me down, or get hysterical, I'd *really* die! Billy has to take it—why can't I?"

The Vargas are a team in many ways, all of which makes for one of the most ideal marriages this reporter ever saw. In Hawaii and California, they are recognized as surf board champions, and their love of outdoor sports is shared equally. "Sure, I revel in the fame and publicity that goes with being Mrs. Billy Varga," admits Rosebud. "It's great to bask in the glory of a famous husband, even though the glory is second-hand. Yes, I even enjoy the envy of other wives when they find out who my husband is.

"But, after all, I'm no wall flower or shrinking violet," claims Mrs. V. staunchly and unnecessarily, "—I want a little fame of my own. Didn't I start out in show business? (She did.) My mother was a Ziegfield Follies beauty and I was a protege of the great dance man, Gus Edwards. At the time I met Billy, my father was a well-known magazine editor. With a background like that, it was impossible for me to just sit back and be a suburban housewife. Instead, I travelled all over the world with Billy, as his business manager, valet, and general helper. I kept up my own interest in sports like swimming and surf boarding—things we can do together."

In other words," interrupted Billy, "we lived! And Rosebud made living twice as much fun."

Rosebud has only one title—Mrs. Billy Varga—but she'd rather have that than a hundred belts and shiny cups. "Being Billy's wife," she says with deep warmth, "is the same as being world champion. Think of it—over a billion women in the world, and I'm the only one who ever made it!"

What can you say to a woman like that? The reporter exused himself quietly and crept out, leaving them alone together. They were still holding hands and smiling. So was the reporter.

THE WRESTLERS ARE SCARED TO DEATH OF YOU

(*continued from page* 17)

the ring and strode up the aisle toward a cold shower. What he got was a hot blood bath. An irate fan, reaching out from his seat as Jerry zoomed past, made a slapping motion at the big man's brawny chest. Graham felt a sting, thought it was a jagged fingernail.

When he reached the dressing room he was a bleeding mess, and four stitches finally stopped the flow.

Ten years and a dozen wounds later, Jerry Graham has strong feelings on the matter of fans. "I hate all wrestling fans to begin with," he states, "—they're all emotionally unstrung. And the ones who try to knife a wrestler, or throw hard objects at him—they're criminally insane and should be treated accordingly!"

Jerry's younger brother, Eddie, who is present at all interviews, chimed in, "Look at me, I've got what they call 'thin skin'—that's why I bleed so easy in the ring. But I bleed even easier *outside* the ring! A half dozen times in the past few years I've been conked by beer cans, soda bottles and other stuff—and I got the scars to prove it! I bleed every time."

Of course, it's easy for the brain shrinkers to yak learnedly about how close we are to Adam and Eve and all that. This still doesn't explain why most fans are content to satisfy their blood lust at wrestling matches with shouting, cheering, jeering and stamping—or maybe tearing a handkerchief apart. The happy truth is that the "killer" fans are a minority—about one percent.

That makes it all right? Guess again. At the Capitol Arena in Washington, when the house is full it means that about fifty drooling, wide-eyed maniacs litter the ringside and aisle seats. Apparently normal people when they buy their tickets and walk to their seats, they become raving madmen—and women—as soon as the bouts start. The first appearance of the wrestlers starts them off; the shouts of the crowd intensifies their emotion; and the offensive handiwork of the villains in the ring tops off their growing blood lust. So that by the time the match is over, these deadly fifty have worked themselves into a lather that only violence can satisfy. Only blood.

Not all of them have the guts to actually give in to their fiendish urge. But some of them do, and this means a real hazard to the departing wrestlers. Ask Karl Von Hess, as we did. Von Hess is without doubt one of the most hated athletes in the world. His very appearance in an arena is usually enough to set off a riot. *After* the match, whether he wins or loses, even a cordon of cops can't always prevent Von Hess from being nicked by a blunt object-or a sharp one.

"People wonder why I detest the wrestling fan," Karl complains. "I detest him because he can't control his emotions. He's a child with an emotional age of six! That makes him a moron—and I've always known it. What they don't like is that I let them know how I feel about it. The truth hurts—that's why they hate me!" The big Prussian smacked his locker with a brutish fist; it left a dent in the sheet steel. "You think I can respect people who do *this* to me?"

He indicated more than a dozen stark livid scars that speckled his body like polka dots. "Most of them are from knife wounds and flying glass," Von Hess said. He bent low and ran his finger in a circular motion around the top of his head. Through the short hair the ugly scar was evident—it was plain to see that his scalp had once been separated from his head.

"It was in Texas," Karl recalled bitterly. "I had just won a match over some local slob when they started throwing things at me. Well, you understand that when you're in the ring with those bright lights directly overhead it's almost impossible to see objects flying toward you, so you can't duck. They were heaving everything that night; candy bars, chairs, lit cigarettes and bottles! Somebody threw a beer bottle. It landed right on top of my head. When it hit, it shattered! I felt a shooting pain, then suddenly everything went black.

"When I woke up I was in the dressing room. My head was covered with bandages and I heard somebody say 'the ambulance will be here any minute.'

"The whole top of my scalp had been sliced off and folded down over my face like a curtain. I was out of action more than three months. That means three months without a penny income. I swear, if I'd have caught the sonofabitch who threw that bottle I'd have killed him!"

Bill Jones, whose special police squad tires to prevent such incidents at wrestling arenas in Washington, D. C., was asked what happens to people who attack wrestlers.

"It depends on what the person does," Jones said. "Take the inoffensive acts. I mean like pulling a wrestler's hair as he passes through the crowd. Or wacking him across the behind. We just warn people who do that sort of thing. The guys we worry about are the killers—the knife throwers!"

A look of concern crossed Bill Jones' face. "It's a peculiar thing," he continued, "if a man throws a knife at a wrestler, but misses, all we can do is evict him from the arena. The only time we can arrest him and press charges is when an act of violence is actually committed. In other words, the knife *must* hit the wrestler."

Jones explained the reasons behind this strange policy. "Wrestlers are paid to take chances. It's their job to stir up an audience. That's what makes wrestling such a thrilling sport to watch. Some of the chances they take come from outside the ring. It is the job of my men to protect the wrestlers from the crowd. Remember, I am paid by the promoter. Therefore, the position of the promoter is my main concern. Now if my men were too tough on the people, it would discourage them from coming to the matches. Thus business would fall off, and nobody would be happy. I'll admit we are playing a very dangerous game when we must even be considerate of a potential killer—a knife-thrower."

Two-Ton Tony Galento, now a respectable wrestling referee, was asked his views on the subject. Said Tony: 'The trouble is the wrestler can't do much about those attacks. Usually he's caught in the aisle among a lot of screaming, shoving men and women and he can't make a move to protect himself. And by the time he's bleeding he can't do a thing about it—or tell who attacked him. And even if he did spot the maniac who shived him, he can't fight back. The law figures the best thing he can do is ignore the whole thing

and just walk away—if he still has enough blood left in him to be able to walk. You see, the hands of a wrestler, and a fighter, too, are considered lethal weapons, like a gun or a knife. So if he hits back, the poor wrestler is in real trouble. The charge against him would be Assault with a Deadly Weapon!"

To get the fans' point of view we cornered two wild-eyed characters watching the matches in Marion, Ohio one night. Neither would admit to having knifed any wrestler recently, nor, of course, would either of them express a desire to do so. But we had observed these two carefully during the semi-final, and several times they looked as though they were ready to slit villain Buddy Austin's throat with a rusty fish hook.

So as not to embarrass anybody, let's call these two potential knife-throwers Joe and Al.

"Joe," I said, "what do you think of people who lose control of themselves during a wrestling match and bop a wrestler with a beer bottle?"

Joe was a big beefy guy who might have been a butcher—or an ex-wrestler. He considered the question for a moment. "What makes you think they lose control?" He shot back. "Maybe they know exactly what they're doing all the time?"

"Thank you, Joe," I said as I turned to Al, who sat across the aisle. Something told me that if I were Buddy Austin, I'd hate to meet Joe in the street after dark. Or even during the day time, for that matter.

"Well," said Al, a skinny little guy with a rash on his neck behind a very dirty collar, "I figure that a person who does things like that must want attention for himself pretty bad. Hell, I feel sorry for guys like that. They're to be pitied."

Just then the announcement was made for the main event. Down the aisle came the big Spanish villain, Oscar Vardun. At once the hall seemed to burst at its seams as the crowd went mad with cries of hate. Beside me, skinny little Al rose to his feet. His face was blood red and his rash stood out against the dirty white collar. He forgot all about me as Vardun strode past us. The little man screamed abuse at the wrestler as his hands curled into claws. Suddenly he reached out and raked his fingernails down Vardun's back. The big Spaniard's face screwed up with pain as he let out a shriek. He whirled around and searched the angry faces behind him. Meanwhile Al had slumped down in his seat, hidden behind the enormous back of an elderly woman who was shouting insults at the wrestler.

I thought to myself how lucky guys like Hard Boiled Haggerty, Killer Kowalski, the Graham brothers and Oscar Vardun are that only one percent of the world's wrestling fans are like that maniac Al.

THE ANGEL WAS NO DEVIL

(*continued from page* 21)

It's too bad that he can't be remembered as Maurice Tillet, educated Frenchman and fine gentleman. For that's what Tillet was. Discovered in Singapore during a tiger hunt, the well-to-do Tillet had about as much desire to be a wrestler as he had to be a ballet dancer. A University graduate and ex-Navy man when he reached the U. S. shores, he was guided by his discoverer, a truly fine wrestler named Carl Pojello, to an immediate and tumultuous reception and a secure place in wrestling's record book.

An excellent athlete in Europe, Tillet played Rugby on French Championship teams, then he joined the Navy. Mustered out in the mid-thirties, he took the trip to Singapore and immortality. Although unimpressed by his strength or wrestling ability, Pojello recognized in the misshapen caricature of a man a gold mine. He put Tillet to the test after teaching him some basic fundamentals, and found that his prodigious prodigy attracted European fans like DiMaggio attracted flies. After a year or two of seasoning, Pojello brought him to the Big Gold Field, America.

During the original Angel's peak years, there appeared on the scene, anxious to cash in on the magnetic name, other "Angels," a whole cloudburst of them. There was the Swedish Angel, the Super-Swedish Angel, the Irish Angel (with side whiskers, no less!) and three or four others who were not so angelic. Of the lot, only one was a good wrestler—Tor Johnson, who billed himself as the Super Swedish Angel. But once the fad died out, they vanished one by one, and sometimes two by two. None, however, ever came close to rivaling Maurice Tillet, the original and most deserving, as an attraction, and none matched him as a human being.

Freaks, when on exhibition, are meant to entertain, to amuse. This was the role of Tillet and he did his job well. But those who knew him were not amused. They only shared his deep sorrow that the wonderful man he really was had to be hidden in so monstrous a body. Carl Pojello, the man who discovered him and later became his closest friend, was so taken by Maurice's passing, that Pojello himself died less than one week later. Their bond of friendship went deeper than anyone believed.

WRESTLING — SPORT OR SIDE SHOW

(*continued from page* 26)

As for *why* a mass audience prefers today's slam-bang, rough-tough, harum-scarum type of pro wrestling—well, the psychiatrists have had a field day with that question. I asked one of these cynics about it only a few days ago. "I'll tell you why people love to watch the hero beat up the villain!" he screamed, practically frothing at the mouth, "—It's because they really hate their fathers, and they imagine that the villain is their father, and they're the hero, and—" And so on. You know how it goes.

Nuts! I'm not saying the psychiatrists are wrong—I'm just saying, So what? Who gives a damn *why* we like to watch a rugged wrestling match—or anything else, for that matter—so long as we like it?

So wrestling is as safe as billiards, eh? The Reader's Digest thinks so. Let's face it. Today's wrestlers are superb athletes; they are trained to the minute and their reflexes are perfect. This means they must not only know how to punish, they must know how to escape punishment or reduce it to a minimum; otherwise they could never wrestle for an hour or more nightly, as many do. No doubt there's a certain kind of spectator who figures the evening is a total loss unless one of the wrestlers is carried out of the hall on a stretcher. But if this happened very often, there would soon not be enough wrestlers to form a program—they'd all be in hospitals!

Like Yukon Eric. To the guy who thinks wrestling is no more dangerous than an old-fashioned hayride, I give him Eric. The big Alaskan was in a match with another 300-pounder, Killer Kowalski, about five years ago. The bout ended when Yukon Eric's ear was torn off by his huge opponent. You can witness the result anytime, because the popular Eric still bears his hideous scar—and always will.

What about blood? The Digest says that the blood which so often flows at main events is actually a carmine fluid squirted from concealed capsules. But according to leading authorities this easily detected method has not been in use for several years.

Anyway, the fact remains that wrestlers bleed like anyone else. If you open up one of their capillaries or veins, blood will come forth, and if the injury occurs at the hairline, the blood will run down the wrestler's face, making him appear to be partially beheaded. Now, friends, if this spectacle adds to the excitement of the match—if it causes the spectator's own blood to flow faster in his veins and increases his enjoyment of the evening—then I say the more blood the merrier—so long as the bleeding one recovers in time to wrestle again the next night! And it doesn't matter whether the blood was caused by his opponent's hangnail, a hidden razor blade, a folding chair or hemophilia!

So now we come at last to the Big Question: Are Wrestling Matches Fixed? Why this is such a big issue I'll never know. For upwards of a quarter-century, now, the charge has been leveled at professional wrestling, "It's faked! all the bouts are prearranged!" They said it back in the mid-thirties; the Encyclopedia Britannica said it in 1946: "Professional wrestling has so degenerated for the most part that it is now little more than a prearranged farce, performed with gruesome gestures by weirdly costumed clowns, and in 1943 there were some 15 claimants to the world's heavyweight championship." The loud-mouths holler it every chance they get. And the funny part of it is that they all think they're saying something important; they act as though they were delivering a message to Garcia or discovering penicilin or something.

To get the reaction of the fans, I made a one-man poll of five leading wrestling arenas. I circulated throughout the audiences and talked to many people. I asked each of them the same question: "Do you think these wrestling bouts are fixed?"

Gradually I realized that the answers were forming a pattern. One fan, a taxi-

driver from Washington, put it best. I'll let him speak for the twenty million others:

"What, wrestling fixed? I don't know, chum, I don't know. *But who the hell cares?* Now will y'get out of my way so. I can watch the wrestling? C'mon, Haystack—give that bum the Big Squash!"

Like the man said, who cares?

THE GRAHAMS BLEED REAL BLOOD

(*continued from page* 31)

of Antonino Rocca and nailed his partner, Edouard Carpentier, to the canvas?

The referee threw up his hands in disgust as Graham struggled to unscrew Rocca's bullet head from its base. "Excessively rough tactics," was the official verdict, and disqualification for the team of Graham and Afflis.

The decision so angered Jerry that he resumed the battle on the ring apron—still trying to unscrew the Rocca head. For some reason this annoyed Antonino—not to mention the hot, pro-Rocca audience. Within seconds, 20,000 furious fans, with the help of Rocca, did their best to make Graham a thing of the past. By the time order was more or less restored, New York's tough Commission Chairman, Julius Helfand, strongly considered banning wrestling from his state (then he remembered the whopping tax take), settled by fining the four wrestlers $2,600.

Final box score for the night showed two fans arrested; 49 folding chairs shipped off to the toothpick factory, many with spatterings of blood on them; and Jerry Graham taking his place alongside Benedict Arnold and Aaron Burr as one of the three most despised men in American history.

That famous Madison Square Garden bout caused a bloody tide the likes of which is seen only at such events as the St. Valentines Day massacre or a busy day at a Chicago slaughter house. Both Graham and Rocca spewed claret like shotgunned wine barrels, and it was this macabre spectacle that electrified the crowd and brought the matter to a head—Graham's head. Never before had Jerry Graham experienced so thrilling a sensation. Never before had he so captivated a crowd. The wheels in the well-oiled Graham brain started to turn faster than they ever turned before. The red blood he mentally transformed into sparkling greenbacks.

Graham concluded that sports fans actually love blood. "They may not know it themselves," he said with a smug grin on his round face, "but every time one of them lays down his buck for a ticket, in his heart he's hoping he'll see somebody bleed to death."

Knowing this, the Grahams decided to make blood while the sun shines, along with the hay. It's easier for the younger Eddie to "flow" because he has skin resembling tissue paper. Says Jerry: "He bleeds easy. I have to work for it."

The elder Graham speaks of all opponents in sharp, biting words. "Not long ago, Eddie and I were wrestling that slob, Don Curtis, and his shill, Mark Lewin. Curtis, who's a damn dirty wrestler for a guy who's supposed to be such a big hero, kept slamming me in the head with his knee, *hard*! He came close to knocking me out. But did the blood come? Hell no! Then, near the end of the match, that creampuff, Lewin, accidently butts Eddie, with his head—gentle-like, it was. What happened? Eddie starts spouting from a four-inch gash. The blood ran down into his eyes and blinded him so he couldn't see what he was doing. So what did the louse do—Lewin, I mean—he took advantage of a blind man and pinned him! I don't approve of those unfair tactics!"

He was reminded that he and his brother are known throughout the civilized world as the two most *un*civilized human beings still on the loose.

"That," said Jerry grandly, "is our *business*! We're paid to be that way—and not only that, we love it. But those goddam heroes should stay heroic and stop stealing our stuff!"

"Speaking of blindness," a reporter asked, uncomfortably, "they say that Eddie—"

Jerry interrupted. "That's right, he can't see out of the left eye. Wrestling did it to him, and he's not sensitive about it. We consider such things badges of honor. Look here," he pointed to a vivid crescent-shaped scar on his left shoulder, "—this took six stitches to close. Know how I got it? A huge native bushman took a bite out of me in Australia! That was one time I bled so much I got weak from it. And see this straight scar just below it? That's from another knife wound I got in Melbourne. Hah!" he barked a harsh, unfunny laugh. "You think we're uncivilized? Man, the fans are worse than we ever were at our *worst*! We never yet tried to cripple a guy—least of all with a knife! Our job is to get in there and win—and make people beg for more. If slugging a guy with a chair makes 'em beg for more, well, we use a chair. But you'll notice that the guy is usually wrestling again the next week." The big man shook his head sorrowfully, as though not understanding man's inhumanity to the Grahams.

"Is is worth it?" he was asked. "You risk your life every time you enter that ring—not so much from what the wrestlers may do to you, but what the fans may do. You've got scars galore, and you've only got three eyes between you. I want to know—is it worth it?"

Jerry Graham touched two or three of the scars gently, thinking it over. He said, "Between us, we also make a quarter-million dollars—every year! We live in expensive homes. We own property in Arizona, we invested in a firm building homes in Drexel, Pennsylvania, and we could buy the U.S.S. Constitution for a private yacht." He grinned, and for one fleeting moment, didn't look at all villainous. "Sure, it's worth it. It's worth every drop of blood!"

Just then a man stuck his head into the dressing room. "You Grahams—you're on in one minute!"

From the auditorium above us there came a great cheer from the crowd. Someone had just defeated someone else in the semi-final event of the evening. For a few minutes the place would be fairly quiet as the mob waited for the big one. But then there would come an announcement over the P.A. system. The TV cameras would close in—and a tremendous roar would fill the vast hall. Screams of anger and hate would drown out the few cheers. The noise would become almost unbearable as the Graham brothers strode arrogantly down the aisle to the ring.

And there, for perhaps a full hour, they would exert more muscular energy than Native Dancer did in winning the Derby; they would wrestle their hearts out—and knock their opponents' brains out—and very likely more of their blood would flow, while the crowd screamed out its pleasure.

Jerry Graham rose from his bench. "Let's go meet our public," he said, and slapped his brother's shoulder. Eddie grinned back at him from his one good eye. They waved and walked out of the room.

Those of us left in the silent dressing room couldn't help but wonder: Was it *really* worth it?

A WRESTLING FAN STRIKES BACK

(*continued from page* 37)

Q. But Mr. Albrecht, you're talking about the top wrestling attraction in the world.

A. Listen, I've watched that Rocca for years. See him now and you see exactly the same thing you saw ten years ago when he first arrived; a filthy pair of size 13 feet! The man can't wrestle. He doesn't know the first thing about wrestling. He reminds me a lot of the New York Yankee baseball team. A lot of people go to Yankee games just to see them beaten—because they're a monotonous monopoly. And so is Rocca!

Q. Forgetting personalities for the moment, Mr. Albrecht, what changes would you make in wrestling?

A. Well, for one thing, both male and female wrestlers should be made to wear full-length leotards, just as they do in amateur wrestling. I'm no prude, but I think you'll admit that wrestlers quite often flirt with disaster when the going gets rough! More than once I've seen a referee act just in time to prevent a case of indecent exposure. And let's face facts. When you have two girls in there banging each other around, well, they can get into the most disgusting and suggestive positions. When you have teen-agers in the crowd, or watching on TV, things like that give wrestling a black eye.

Q. You may have a point, sir.

A. Thanks. Another thing—I think women fans should be banned from the first five rows of every arena. I say this for basicaly the same reasons I gave for putting more clothes on the wrestlers. In my years I've made careful studies of the fans. And psychiatrists have told me that the sight of two men—or women—locked in flesh-rubbing contact, together with the smell of sweat and the sound of heavy breathing, has a

very powerful effect on female spectators. It makes them do things they shouldn't do—both at the ringside and when they get home. I think if they are kept further away from the ringside the effects would be lessened.

Q. What do you think about lady wrestling?

A. They furnish a kind of comic relief and, in many ways, are even more exciting to watch than the men. They're rougher, pound for pound, and I've seen some remarkably good wrestlers among them. That Mildred Burke was a wonder. Tremendous, I call her.

Q. Mr. Albrecht, have you any comments about referees? You made an interesting remark before we started the tape recorder.

A. I said that any wrestler who as much as lays a finger on the referee should be barred for life. I firmly believe that authority must be retained at all times. Without official authority in the ring you'd have nothing but a street fight—and that isn't sport. Both in wrestling and boxing the referee is the sole authority and his position must be respected at all times.

Q. But to ban a man for life. Isn't that rather strict punishment?

A. I ask you. Suppose a big league ball player didn't like an umpire's call and so he hit the umpire. What would happen to the player? You know as well as I. He'd never play ball again. And it will have served him right. The same thing should apply to wrestlers.

If you had the authority to make one single improvement in wrestling, Mr. Albrecht, what would you do?

That's easy. I would forcibly put Antonino Rocca aboard the first transportation back to Argentina. Those size 13 feet—disgusting!

Thank you sir for your interesting comments. I'm sure you've given our readers something to thing about.

Nonsense, young man! ● *end*

ROCCA'S PLAN

(*continued from page* 34)

has known since he first arrived in the United States more than ten years ago. Considering his degree in electrical engineering, plus other proof of his intellectual and cultural background, you must respect his opinions on subjects other than wrestling.

Relaxed in his luxurious apartment on New York's West 57th Street, he said: "if the people of the world—especially the politicians—would listen to me, there would be no wars!" In the silence that followed this startling statement, the great man dropped two dextrose tablets into a glass of water. The silence lasted until he had swallowed the energy-packed beverage. "Here," he said, after the dramatic pause, "is my idea."

Then he talked continuously for more than an hour. His soft, well-modulated voice rose and fell with his emotions, and an unearthly electricity seemed to flow from him. It was easy to understand how the sheer power of his personality has charmed so many millions of people.

He peered through eyes that seemed too gentle for the aggressive, almost animalistic face. "I'm no genius," he said, "and I don't claim to know all the answers. But I do know *some* of them—and with these as a start I think smarter men could find the rest!"

Rocca went on. He would have, in any case, because he is one of the world's best non-stop talkers. Luckily, most of the things he says are interesting. "In the first place," he said, "the entire world—the *civilized* world—is neurotic. No argument there, right? Now—the *uncivilized* world—the African and Asiatic natives, the Pacific island aborigines, the Eskimos —*they are not neurotic*—right?

"All right, then. Who has all the wars, all the prostitution, all the problems in the world—the civilized nations? Therefore, if we could find the secret of how the uncivilized people stay calm and cool, we could end all of our neuroses and the world wouldn't need all these psychiatrists!

"But could we stay civilized?" I asked. "Isn't it civilization that causes all of our nervous disorders—ulcers, constipation, mental illness and so forth?"

Rocca, warming to his subject, nodded his head vigorously. "True! But that's only because we let it. Sure, a fast pace is necessary for us to be civilized—we have to write the ads fast, and read the commercials fast, and get to the office fast; if we don't, some other guy will beat us out. That's competition. It's competition that makes us neurotic. Why? Because we're *physically* weak. We can't take it. Soft, starchy foods weaken our stomachs and intestines. We don't get enough exercise, so our muscles get flabby and our bellies bulge. Naturally, when we work under a strain, we get ulcers; this makes us nervous and keeps us upset all the time. So what happens? We have to take it out on somebody or something. We pick a fight or we kick the dog or spank the kids—and we make somebody unhappy. So *they* take it out on somebody else—or maybe they hit back at us! And before we know it—bang!—we have a busted jaw, or a bullet in the belly, or a divorce, or a juvenile delinquent, or—" Antonino paused. He pounded the arm of the chair for emphasis. "—Or a *war!*"

"What about in the old days when men weren't so civilized? They still had wars. Were they as neurotic then?" I inquired.

Rocca didn't bat an eye at the question. "The reasons for war then were different. Those were *healthy* wars, wars of progress. We needed them to build the world. Now there is no longer any need for wars. But—we're sure as hell going to have them if we don't *calm down* as men and as nations! We've got to control our nerves. Once we do that, we can control our H-bombs. We won't need them!"

So far, what he said was a suggestion, not a plan.

But then Tony Rocca made it a plan. "Only physical exercise can give a man peace of mind—*strenuous* exercise—together with plenty of *sleep*! We don't get enough of either. The reason we don't get enough sleep is that we don't get enough exercise —it's a vicious cycle! Now—since most of us are too lazy, too stupid—or too ignorant —to make ourselves healthy, then I say the Government must step in and help. They should start a great physical culture program that would take in schools, colleges and all civil service jobs.

"Take insurance physical exams, for example. Suppose, in order to take out a life insurance policy a normal person had to be able to chin himself at least once—*and for every extra chin, the premium was lowered.* Do you realize that inside of a few months this would be a nation of physical culturists?"

But how does that figure to stop wars?

Rocca, who has the widest shoulders a man can have on a six-foot frame, leaped to his feet. He was clad in a satin dressing gown which showed his famous 20-inch calves. This animal-like man is his own best argument for strenuous exercise. Striding up and down the living room floor, he waved his arms like a windmill.

"The Americans are good salesmen," he said, "Suppose they sell this health idea to other countries. It would be so easy! Suppose we help them get their programs going. *Then*—" Like a pouncing tiger, the stalking figure turned in mid-stride, "—then we would hold international competitions —maybe an improved Olympics—in all of the sports requiring strength, especially wrestling, weight lifting and hammer throwing. The winners would be determined on a point system. And the rewards would be something better than a little piece of metal tied with a pretty ribbon!

"Listen!" Rocca went on like a machine gun, every word a bullet. "I'll start this thing off right now!" And at this point he tossed out his challenge to the Russians. He would, he said, meet the Russian professional champion at any designated place and wrestle him to a finish.

"If I win," said Rocca, his dark eyes blazing with enthusiasm, "the Russians must agree to join this world-wide Body-Building Program. If they approve I will even agree to be the director!"

What do others think of the Rocca proposal? Senator Estes Kefauver once took Antonino before a gathering of the Nation's law-makers; they included Vice-President Nixon, and such influential senators as John McClellan of Arkansas. "Relax," Rocca told them while they listened respectfully, "relax and forget your worries, your neuroses. Lie on the floor with your feet held six inches high and hold it—and listen to soft music in the dark."

So impressed was Senator McClellan, that he now keeps a picture of Antonino Rocca on his desk.

This, of course, is merely an outline of Rocca's plan to end wars. The details are highly complicated and much smoothing out has to be done. However the editors of WRESTLING REVUE, working in close harmony with Rocca, have devised a set of working plans with which to push forward. And with the enormous prestige of Rocca behind the plan, its chances of implementation appear promising. The big question is: is the world ready for a plan so revolutionary and yet so simple? That is the part Antonino fears most of all.

"I have great faith in my World Health Program," he said with a worried look on his face. "But will the fat, ulcer-laced politicians understand it?"

DEATH

(*continued from page* 70)

—whatever it was, it poked its cold fingers into Romano's brain and stirred a dark fearsome thought to life.

Some weeks after that interview Mike was matched with Irish Jack Donovan in Washington, D.C. It was not an important match, just a preliminary. The kind of bout that builds up the crowd's emotions for the BIG main event. It would be fast, furious and very noisy. But the risks would be slight, no blood, no bruises. Just a good clean exciting match—Period.

As they met in mid-ring there seemed little doubt about the outcome. Romano was the bigger name; he should win. But Donovan threw away the book. Maybe he wanted to add to his reputation. Or maybe he just felt like giving the crowd more for its money. So he threw in a few extra body slams, bouncing Mike off the boards time and time again.

But then, to Donovan's surprise, Mike didn't get up. Hell, he thought, guess I took all the fight out of him—he's giving me the match!

After a while the house doctor took a closer look and immediately ordered an ambulance. Grinning, the ambulance driver climbed into the ring with his stretcher. He had done this same thing before; it always gave the crowd a charge. Again the doctor bent over Romano's still form and applied the stethoscope to his heart. One look at the doctor's face and the driver stopped grinning. So did Donovan. They placed the limp form on the stretcher —a little too carelessly, some of the ringsiders thought—and carried him away. Period.

Every once in a while somebody like Mike Romano dies, and once again the public is reminded that wrestlers, too, die in the line of duty. For awhile the jeering will stop and you don't hear the accusations that wrestling is a "Fake." But this state of shock never seems to last long. Someone is always bound to say, "Ah, the guy had a bum ticker—he could have croaked riding in an elevator!"

Maybe he could have. A guy can have a heart attack anyplace. And wrestlers have them, too. They have them because they're wrestlers—because they strain their bodies to the limit several times every week, taking more rugged and sustained punishment than any other group of athletes.

Study these names:

Joe Shimkus	Eddie Baker
George Kinney	Eli Fisher
Steve Znoski	Tex Wright
Jack Lewis	Buddy O'Brien
Jim Browning	Gordon McKinley

Each of these men died in the ring, or as a direct result of having been in the ring. And some of them were top stars. There were many others, lesser known names few can remember. They all made the headlines just once. Twice, rather; on the sports pages and on the obituary page. On the same day.

Let us consider the tragic case of Gordon McKinley. Just a few short years ago, Gordon reached manhood—a magnificent manhood. Tall and powerfully built, he wanted to be a professional wrestler more than anything in the world. So he went to a New York promoter and pleaded for a chance. The wise promoter saw a perfect "hero" type in Gordon's clean cut features and his magnificent physique. This guy had everything to draw the crowds, the promoter thought. And there was also the dramatic factor that Gordon had been born deaf and dumb.

Gordon had been working on the New York waterfront. The men he worked with were tough—the toughest. Some of them were causing him trouble. So he wanted to prove that he was tough as they were. A reputation as a wrestler, he figured, would do it.

The big Irishman trained hard for his new task. He learned to whip his great 6 feet 4, 250 pound body around the ring smoothly and efficiently. At last he was ready for action.

Gordon was matched with tough Len Montana, an experienced tough guy, in Ohio. Gordon won the first fall after a very hard struggle. When they came out for the second fall, Montana was seen to stop several feet short of McKinley.

"There was a strange look in the kid's eyes," said Len later. "Something didn't look right."

The veteran star stepped back a pace. And then, like a mountain that sinks into itself, Gordon McKinley slowly collapsed onto the canvas. He was dead.

Young McKinley's desire to be a wrestler was strong. But his heart was weak.

The question is often asked, "Why are wrestlers so beefy?" Or, if the person inquiring is really anti-wrestling, he'll use the word "fat". There is good reason why they carry an extra twenty or thirty pounds of extra beef. If you've watched today's wrestlers in action, you know that fifty percent of their work consists of hurtling through the air—by themselves or with the help of their opponents—and landing with a crash on the canvas, the apron, the floor boards or against the ringpost.

This can hurt, and often does. But it hurts a lot more when there is no upholstery to protect the bones and nerve endings from the shock of impact. A half-inch or more of nice cushiony blubber adds years to a wrestler's life!

The bigger men—the tall ones or the squat ones with lots of muscle, who weigh 250 or more—must diet themselves into gaining another twenty or thirty pounds. This is because they fall harder than lighter men, thus the danger of broken bones and ripped ligaments is greater. To protect themselves, they add the gristle. Jerry Graham is a good example of this, as is Yukon Eric and Don Leo Jonathan. If these men were to visit a steam bath now and then, they'd look better, maybe —but they would also suffer more injuries, possibly a total loss of income. Perhaps even loss of life.

Handsome Dennis Clary was a sensation a few years ago. With his Mr. America physique, he attracted attention everyplace he took off his shirt (collar size: 17½). Girls flipped over him and men envied him. At 32, Clary was in the prime of life with everything to live for, including a wrestling income of $20,000 a year.

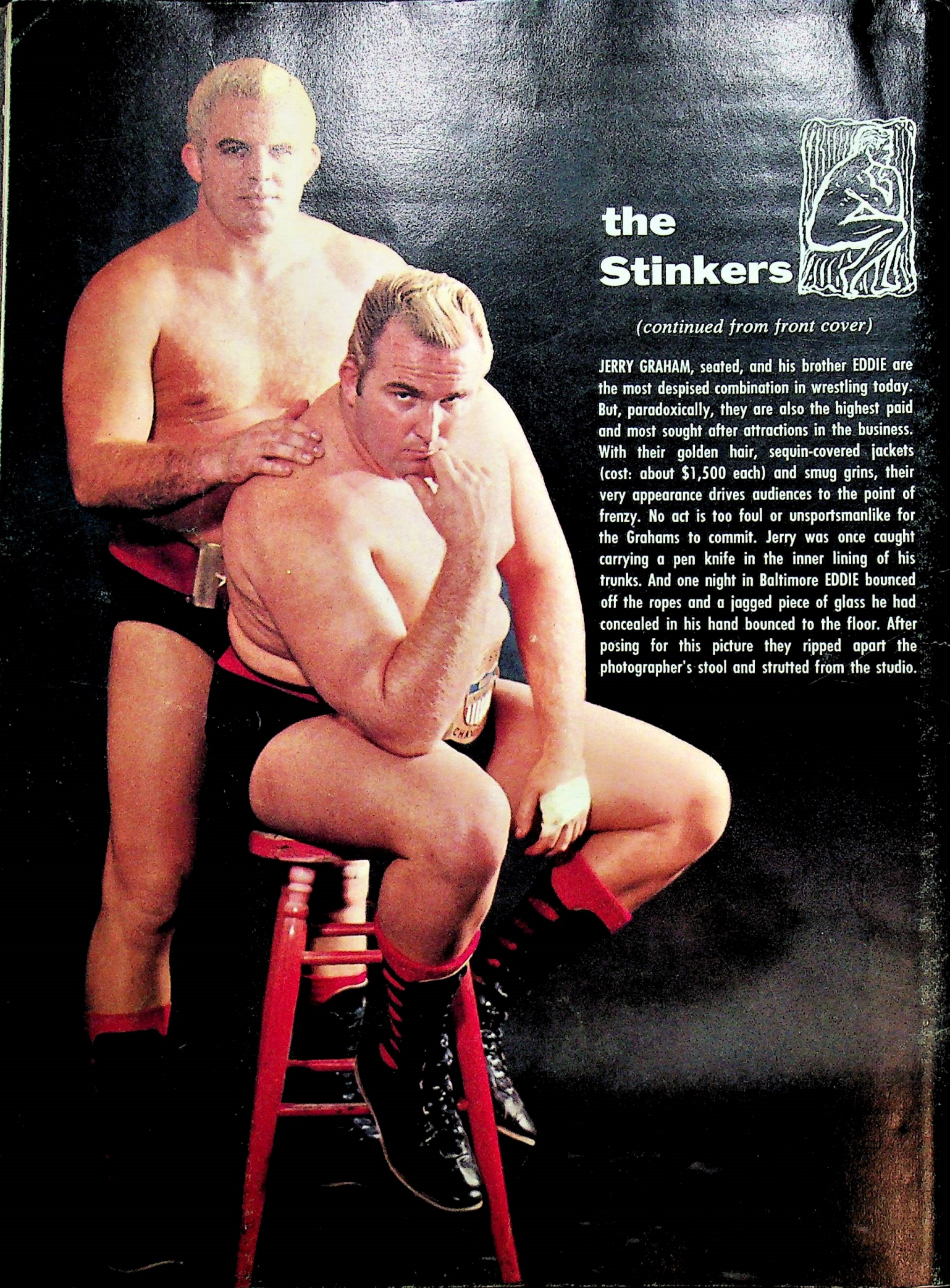
But what was it that caused his sudden attacks of nausea, the dizziness, the inability to focus his eyes, at times, and the blinding headaches that made his life unbearable?

The last two body slams he took did it. The last two flying tackles hastened the end. Sudden collapse in the ring, the frightening whine of an ambulance siren, the emergency brain operation later that night and the discovery of that giant brain tumor. Who knows in which one of Clary's hundreds of bouts the injury was incurred which started the deadly growth? All we know is that the ring had claimed another victim.

As for injuries that came close to causing death, there have been too many to catalogue. Probably the most famous of all is the case of *Yukon Eric and his Missing Ear*. Famous because it was the most spectacular injury in wrestling history, and also because each and every time the giant Eric steps into a ring, people are reminded of it. No one who saw Killer Kowalski's knee sever Eric's ear like a Guillotine will ever forget the gruesome sight of that ear rolling on the canvas.

Many famous stars suffer from internal bleeding, the result of falls which look routine to the fans. And you'd be amazed to learn how many wrestlers deteriorate little by little, slowly dying from fall after fall, at last to vanish forever from the programs without so much as a one line notice on the last page.

So every time you attend the matches, remember that there is *always* a fourth man in the ring. Because, as Mike Romano said, "it's a tough business and the one thing you can't ever fix is death."



the Stinkers

(continued from front cover)

JERRY GRAHAM, seated, and his brother EDDIE are the most despised combination in wrestling today. But, paradoxically, they are also the highest paid and most sought after attractions in the business. With their golden hair, sequin-covered jackets (cost: about $1,500 each) and smug grins, their very appearance drives audiences to the point of frenzy. No act is too foul or unsportsmanlike for the Grahams to commit. Jerry was once caught carrying a pen knife in the inner lining of his trunks. And one night in Baltimore EDDIE bounced off the ropes and a jagged piece of glass he had concealed in his hand bounced to the floor. After posing for this picture they ripped apart the photographer's stool and strutted from the studio.